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AN ECHO OF THE UNKNOWN

OR

GUIDE TO LADAKH

BY

PANDIT AMAR NATH, B.A.

TEHSILDAR LADAKH
(KASHMIR REVENUE SERVICE)

*S. Yagub
Batapa.*

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INTRODUCTION

The fauna and flora, the huge glaciers, the snow-covered peaks and other beauties of the Himalayan range round the upper Indus on the north-east frontier of the happy valley of Kashmir attract the attention of many European sportsmen and scientists. Also the big market at Leh for trade with Chinese Turkistan and Tibet brings Indian traders to visit Ladakh annually. My learned friend Pandit Amar Nath, B. A., the Tehsildar of Leh, has, for the convenience of all such visitors, in this handbook, placed at their disposal his two years' experience and knowledge of the country and its people. Here is all the information about the journey required by a new-comer to this strange and secluded abode of the Buddhists. The hilly countries of the long Himalayan and Hindu-Kush ranges as far as Afghanistan were once inhabited by Buddhists, whose small chieftains were under the suzerainty of the Dalai Lama of Lhasa in Tibet, both in temporal and spiritual matters, until all the northern country except some portions of Ladakh embraced Islam. Skardu and Ladakh were conquered by the gallant troops of His Highness the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir under the command of the brave Wazir Zorawar in about 1840 A. D. As regards spiritual matters the Ladakhi Buddhists are still under the Dalai Lama, who appoints religious heads or Skushoks of all the Monasteries (Gunpas) situated in the district, the chief of which are in the villages

of Lamayuru, Ridzong, Likir, Phiang, Spituk, Summur, Trikse, Mashro, Hemis, and Hanle. The language of the people is Tibetan, which is a branch of the Mongolian language, and for this reason the districts of Skardu and Ladakh are called Little Tibet. The Dards, however, still speak Shina (the Gilgiti dialect). The chief things which strike a new-comer are the stately and picturesque Gunpas, engravings on rocks and stones of the Buddha and his chief disciples, Mani walls, Chortens, Latos and the collection of 108 small chortens which abound on the roadside of every village. The word Gunpa corresponds with Gupha (secluded cave of the Hindu saints of India). The author has also given a comprehensive account of its people who belong to various races of Mongolians, Mons, Dards, Tibetan and Arghons (the descendants of the Moslim Kashmiri, Indian state soldiers, traders etc., who married Buddhist wives and settled in Leh) with their customs, their religious festivals etc. The amusing customs of the Buddhist Dards of Dah agree with the customs of the people of the Bagrot valley in Gilgit, who though Moslems, still abstain from eating the butter and milk of cows and fish and do not keep fowls. The Shin inhabitants of the lower valleys of the Indus migrated in former times via Chilas and Astor and settled in the districts of Skardu, Drass and Dah-Hannu, where they are called Brogpas (shepherds). The former two have embraced Islam while the latter are still Buddhists and keep their former traditions.

The laborious task of collecting material for this interesting book in his leisure hours, besides being praiseworthy,

shows the literary taste of the young author and deserves the appreciation of His Highness the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir.

Dated Leh,
the 3rd March 1931.

Ghulam Muhammad.

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DEDICATION

The Author of this little book on Leh very respectfully dedicates it to Rai Bahadur Major-General, Thakar Janak Singh Bahadur, B. A., C. I. E., Public Works Minister, His Highness' Government, as a token of his high regard for him. The General before his elevation to the present high office has had the opportunity of personally seeing the people and the country which is the subject of this book, when he was the highest controlling authority of the district. He, as the State Joint Commissioner and Wazir, toured much in the district and has left very happy recollections with the simple but sedate people of this place, by his ever smiling face and ungrudging labours to allay their grievances. The author in the course of his tours learnt with pleasure that people spoke of the General as a very kind, straightforward officer, having at his heart the solace of those whom he came to govern.

Dated Leh, the
15th January 1931.

Amar Nath,
Author.

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PREFACE

This little book is intended chiefly for the use of European visitors and travellers for whom it will serve as a guide to this strange country. But besides that, I hope the subject-matter will also be of interest to the general reader, especially one who has never been to these parts. There have been elaborate works and voluminous literature by various renowned authors, descriptive of the country and its people, their habits and customs, but the want of a compendium giving general information on these heads, has all along been keenly felt. What I have attempted to recount in these few pages will, it is hoped, suffice to supply the needs of the travelling public.

I have in the first instance to acknowledge with gratitude the courtesy of Rai Bahadur, Major-General Thakar Janak Singhji Bahadur, B. A., C. I. E., Public Works Minister, His Highness' Government Jammu and Kashmir State in allowing so kindly this book to be dedicated to him. I further take this opportunity of expressing my most sincere thanks to Captain G. A. Falconer, I. A., British Joint Commissioner, Ladakh, and G. Thorp, Esquire, Director Game Preservation Department of Jammu and Kashmir State for their condescending to accord permission to include Res rules and rules governing the use of Rest Houses and in-dents on granaries and sportsmen rules in this book without reference to which my chapters Nos. VII and VIII could not

have been written. The latter was so courteous as to supply me with a copy of the special sportsmen's rules, and thus enabled me to solve a difficulty I was labouring under in this far-off place where no copy was available.

I have also to mention with thanks the assistance I have now and then taken from Rev. Joseph Gergan and his son Mr. S. Skyabldan Gergan, third teacher at Leh School. Both these friends have been of considerable help to me for which my heartiest thanks are due to them.

I am also very conscious of the help I have received from Dr. A. H. Franke's historical researches, Drew's Jammu and Kashmir and Mr. Joshua Duke's Handbook to Kashmir. These distinguished writings on this country are in fact memoirs worthy to be preserved in golden plates.

In a place like Leh, I was at my wits' end for a typist to type the manuscript for the printers, but this difficulty was solved for me by Mr. J. Tharchin who was good enough to studiously do it for me in whatever spare time he could find for it. I, therefore, have to acknowledge with gratitude his assistance in this matter, without which it would have been simply impossible to send it to the press at such an early opportunity.

My best thanks are also due to Khan Bahadur Maulvi Ghulam Mohammad, Special Charas Officer, Leh for so kindly going through the whole draft and writing an introduction and making valuable suggestions. He himself happens to be an author whose "Festivals and Folklore of Gilgit", published by the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1905, has been much admired.

I have also to gratefully acknowledge that Dr. Miss Mary Shawe, M. B., Ch. B. notwithstanding the fact of her being very busy, has taken great pains in going through the manuscripts and guided me by her valuable advice.

Basti Haveli,

Leh,

15th March 1931.

Amar Nath.

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CHAPTER I

DESCRIPTION OF THE TOWN OF LEH AND OF PLACES OF SPECIAL INTEREST THEREIN

Perched on a scarp of rocky mountains lies the beautiful little town of Leh in a gorge formed between hills where the valleys begin to widen. Surrounded by ever snow-covered lofty mountains, it has the Indus river flowing on one side to remind one of the vagueness and vanity of life in such a secluded corner of the world, where only Nature's beauties are profuse and self-sufficient, to place him in real joy. The hum-drum life of a city, with its revelries cutting deep at the root of morality, is entirely absent and in its stead are

“Tongues in trees
Books in running brooks
Sermons in stones
And good in everything.”

Shakespeare.

From the open maidan (plain) of Spituk village at a distance of 5 miles from it, the town opens to the view of a visitor like the Norham Castle so beautifully described by Sir Walter Scott in his 'Marmion'. The road from Spituk leads up to it by an ascent of 1000 ft. in five miles till 11,500 ft. is reached which

is the height of Leh from sea-level. The palace of the old rulers of Leh, which is the most conspicuous edifice, majestically built up, by Gyalpo Singhe Namgil to the height of eight or nine stories, from the shoulder of a spur, meets the eyes of the wearied traveller from such a far-off distance as 5 miles. Then, as he proceeds, beautiful poplar and willow trees, whitewashed houses and huts, lying in their clusters, remind him of the romantic dwellings of the fairyland. The green leaves hanging over the whitewashed dwellings give them a specially favoured aspect.

The Monastery known as Tsemo Gunpa and the towers of an old fortification lie on the same ridge as the old palaces, but they are a little higher up and on the slope beneath is the main part of the habitations of the town itself. The traveller as he slowly marches on to the town reaches at last a small gateway situated as the main entrance on the road from Kashmir. It is here that he sees the long, straight wide bazaar with a beautiful Mosque standing at its head commanding the whole situation. On both sides of this famous Victoria bazaar are situated the shops and houses of this trading centre which in themselves afford a picturesque view.

Just adjoining, to the left of the gateway, is the State Government Civil Dispensary beautifully constructed with a sufficiently open verandah in front. Nearby comes, in the same row, the State Telegraph Office which is a two-storied tidy building having a verandah in front on both floors. Farther on, to the left of the Mosque is the big mansion known as Partap Bhawan which is the residence of the State Representative with the State flag flying in the central portion of the building. It can rightly be termed the Government House and the presence of the royal flag flying in its stately colours gives it a commanding aspect. The traveller while passing on to Dak Bungalow, outside the town, must enjoy the beautiful view. Nearly opposite to Partap Bhawan, but a little higher up, the road turns to the left and after a short distance come the English quarters which are outside the town. They are situated amongst the willows and poplars, the most conspicuous being the residence of the British Joint Commissioner, the Representative of His Majesty the King and Emperor of India. This majestically built edifice is perhaps the most beautiful and finely constructed building in Leh. From the outer door to the main Kothi is a straight road, having fine grassy plots and

willows and poplars on both sides. This road finishes at the foot of a platform on which lies the main building. Facing it is the Union Jack flying in its awe-inspiring grandeur. Behind this building is the Dak Bungalow and a cemetery.

On arrival in this beautiful town, as is usual with everybody visiting a new place, one is apt to enquire if it has any places worth seeing. To answer his query, the following may be mentioned as places of special interest in Leh :—

- (a) Old palaces of the rulers of Leh.
- (b) Tsemo and Sankar Gunpas.
- (c) Old fort constructed by the conqueror of Leh.
- (d) 2 cemeteries.
- (e) Mohamedan Mosque.

It would not be out of place to make some mention of these buildings in order to acquaint the reader beforehand with what he will see. Accordingly I give below some useful hints in regard to each, in the same order in which they have been put above.

(a) The palace of the former rulers of Leh is an edifice boldly built up from the shoulder of a spur. It consists of 8 or 9 stories. It was built up by Singhe Namgil the most powerful of the dynasty of

the Rajas of Leh. It is said to be constructed in the 16th century A. D. He flourished at the time when 'Akbar "the Great" of the Moghul emperors reigned in India and Queen Elizabeth ruled England. This old palace is a majestic building built of old stone masonry walls and is a living monument of the olden arts of the time. It has very commodious rooms some of which are worthy of being seen even at this time, specially the Durbar Hall or the court room of the Raja. In front of this Hall is an open space locally called "Thak Chen" which served as a dancing place on ceremonial occasions. The court room has a beautifully constructed platform, on which sat the Raja and his Rani, without any veil, in all their royal glory ; and beneath it, on both sides sat the Raja's ministers. As soon as the Raja took his seat on the throne, the Takchos or dancing females commenced their local dances to dispel any gloom the Raja might have. These Takchos were not ordinary bazari women but women of good families who were fully conversant with the art of dancing. Dancing is a favourite pastime of the people of this place and any woman who acquired this art was considered to be a woman of quality. Thus these Takchos found special favour with their rulers.

The following table shows the various branches of the administration of the Raja's government :—

The Head(1) *Raja*.

(2) *Kung-lon* or Prime Minister.

(3) *Kalons* or Ministers.

(4) *Lonpos* or Assistant Ministers.

(5) *Ghansum* or Elders.

No. 5 above were in fact the representatives of various villages and it were they to whom preliminary applications were made. They sat as an assembly and heard oral applications, as no applications were made in writing and their decisions too were oral. In case of their decision being unacceptable to a party, the latter had to go to No. 4 and if they too could not satisfy the parties, the matter was to go up to the next higher No. 3 and so on. When at last the matter came up for hearing by the Raja, the various sections of his administration as described above had to sit with him in a body and it was then that the matter was decided by the consensus of all.

(b) Tsemo Gunpa as its very name implies is situated on the highest of all summits in Leh proper. It served in the beginning as residential palace of Gyalpo Dailan Namgil who was the grandfather of Gyalpo Singhe Namgil who constructed the palace

which has been described in (a) above. When on the construction of the new palace the royal personæ moved into it, this building was set apart for religious purposes and since then it is being used as a Gunpa or Monastery. The most conspicuous object in it is the hugely built statue of the “God of love” or “Maitriya”, which is locally called Chamba. This statue is as high as the storey of the building wherein it has been set up. The building itself is a finely constructed old edifice in which the timber used is mostly pencil cedar. This pencil cedar locally called “Shukpa” is found in abundance between Shamsa Kharbu and Drass in Kargil Tehsil.

Sankar Gunpa is situated in a plain in the north of Leh at a distance of about half a mile from the town. This is the only Gunpa constructed in a level plain as almost all the Gunpas will be seen situated on high hills. The most interesting object to be seen in it is the awe-inspiring statue of Chandaszi, who has 100 hands, 100 feet and 11 heads. This Gunpa is under the control of the Spituk Gunpa Skushok who belongs to the yellow sect of the Buddhist faith. The Lamas and Skushoks of this sect wear yellow caps and reddish garments. This Gunpa contains a big library of Buddhist literature.

(c) The name of Wazir Zorawar opens a new epoch in the history of Kashmir. It is due to his undaunted spirit and passionate loyalty to his ruler, that Kashmir can boast to-day of the conquest of Ladakh district. In the teeth of the frowning weather, the difficult conditions of the country, and freezing cold, quite unused to its fatal consequences, he set out to conquer Ladakh. He succeeded in his noble errand and left an everlasting name in the history of Jammu and Kashmir State. That fearless General was the head and leader of the Dogras when they conquered this country. It was somewhere in 1840 when the Sikhs conquered Kashmir with the help of the ruler of Jammu who also to enlarge his borders selected Wazir Zorawar for the conquest of Ladakh. This capable General's arms were uniformly crowned with success and this, the then lawless country, was brought under subjection. The fort of Leh which is situated at a distance of one mile from the town in the western direction was constructed by him. This huge building itself is a living monument of his martial and engineering skill. It is surrounded by a moat, which, it is said, always remained filled with water to ward off an enemy or undesirable people. Even now knee-deep water

flows in it. The fort is a three-storeyed building. The watch towers are all in the second storey and the barracks for soldiers and officers are all in the first storey, while the ground floor was set apart for storing ammunitions, Military stores and provisions and for keeping mules and ponies. The main compound, around which is the main building, can be reached by crossing four big outer gateways. The whole building is made of stone masonry plastered over with white mud. It has within it a spring of water as well. Two rooms are provided for Hindu Deities, one of which is known as Devi Dwara Temple and the other as Mahabir Mandar. There is also another place in the main compound to its western side, known as "Panj Peers", which is dedicated for worship by the Mohamedans. At present in the fort a Military detachment is housed and the State flag standing in the outermost compound flies in its awe-inspiring royal grandeur, giving the building from a distance a martial appearance. In the main compound, a small building has been constructed recently to serve as a jail for prisoners. A little bridge made over the moat in front of the outermost gateway links this fort with the outer world.

(d) There are two cemeteries in Leh, one is situat-

ed midway between the Dak Bungalow and the Residence of the British Joint Commissioner Ladakh. This is known as Karzu Chhenmo Cemetery and therein lie in eternal rest the remains of European officers only. There are two tombs in it which deserve special mention. One of these is that of Ferdinand Stolickzo, Ph. D. who died at Moorgo on 10th June 1874, while returning from Yarkand with the British Mission to which he was attached as a naturalist. He had achieved eminence by his researches into geology and natural history. The Government of India, in recognition of his able and honourable services caused a monument to be constructed in this cemetery in 1876 which stands as the most conspicuous in the cemetery.

Another one is the grave of Mr. Andrew Dalglish, a Central Asian trader who was treacherously murdered on 8th April 1888. This gentleman was proceeding to Yarkand when at the Karakoram pass he came to a sad end. He had an Afghan Dad Mohamad Khan in his employ who being reprimanded for some dereliction in duty took the insult to heart, and took up his gun to fire at his master. The European gentleman had a very faithful dog with him who, seeing the Afghan trying to shoot his

master, fell upon him to play his most praiseworthy part in this tragic drama. The treacherous Afghan first shot the dog and then shot his master. The murderer having committed this heinous crime absconded as a fugitive from justice. He was subsequently traced and got arrested by one Munshi Shamsud-Din of Leh at Samarkand. The said murderer was put in jail by the Russian Authorities where he committed suicide. The Government of India in recognition of his meritorious services in bringing about the arrest of the offender in this tragic murder awarded Rs. 3000/- to Munshi Shamsud-Din which was presented to him in an open Durbar at Leh by H. Ramsay, Esquire, the then British Joint Commissioner Ladakh. Major Ramsay's certificate which he was pleased to give to Munshi Shamsud-Din afterwards is in itself an epitome of these gallant services and as such is reproduced here for the reader's perusal :—

Political Agency,

Murree,

Certified that some 6 or 7 years ago, when I was British Joint Commissioner in Ladakh, and wanted a capable man to accompany Capt. Bower and help him to search Turkistan for Dad Mohamad, the murderer of Mr. Dalgleish, I asked the wazir of Ladakh

to give me a capable man. The Wazir, Pandit Radhakisen, Rai Bahadur, selected Munshi Shamsud-Din, who was known to me. I approved of the man and sent him to Turkistan with Capt. Bower and he was fortunate enough to succeed, unaided by Capt. Bower, in finding Dad Mohamed at Samarkand, and in getting him arrested by the Russian authorities, who put him in jail, where he committed suicide.

In the following year after Shamsud-Din's return to Leh, I held a Darbar and distributed Rs. 5,000 reward sanctioned by the Govt. of India for the capture of Dad Mohamed.

I had the pleasure of giving some Rs. 3,000 to Munshi Shamsud-Din as his share of the reward.

I hope he has prospered, since my departure from Ladakh, and that the local authorities have been able to find suitable employment for him.

(Sd.) **H. Ramsay, Major,**

Political Agent.

Murree,

31—7—1895.

The other graveyard is situated near the Bahisht Bagh and is used by the Missionaries and the native Christians.

(e) The beautiful Mohamedan Mosque of Leh was also constructed in the time of Gyalpo Singhe Nam-

gil. It is a two-storeyed building, the lower one contains two shops and the upper one has three rooms which are set apart for various uses of worship.

The room on the two shops is a sufficiently big room and is used as a Prayer Hall. The building faces south and from a distance, it shows a majestic appearance.

Besides these places of interest, whose main importance lies in the fact, that they are the remains of ancient times, there is in this town a British Charitable Dispensary deserving mention. It is, as its very name implies, run on humanitarian lines and is situated a little beyond the turning point of the way to the Dak Bungalow opposite the Partap Bhawan. It was opened by the Moravian Mission in about 1887 A. D. It has since then been rendering very useful service to humanity and has become a very popular institution. Free aid and attendance, on the rich and poor alike, by its able doctors, at a moment's call, be it day or night, are its special characteristics which in themselves are a living monument to show with what human pathos its foundations have been laid. It has a record of eminent Doctors at its back, out of whom Drs. Karl Marx, E. Shawe and A. Reeve Heber are worthy of special mention.

Dr. Karl Marx started the work and it was in his time that the Dispensary came into being. He breathed his last in this land by Ladakhi fever and his grave is in the cemetery near Bahisht Bagh.

Dr. E. Shawe was the next qualified man to see to its developments. The former building in which the dispensary was housed being unsuitable, a new building was constructed in his time and it is that very building wherein the dispensary has since then been located. There are several anecdotes told about his passionate love and sympathy for sick folk around him, but it would suffice to narrate one of these in this book.

Once one Ishey of Leh fell sick of Ladakhi fever and Dr. Shawe was sent for to treat his case. The patient being very poor could not even afford to pay for the diet prescribed by the Doctor. The fact being brought to the latter's notice, he defrayed all expenses from his own pocket besides administering all drugs and medicines free of charge. Not only this, but finding that there was none to attend to his patient's agricultural lands, he himself being in bed, the doctor got his lands tilled, ploughed and subsequently looked after, when the seed was in, by labour hired at his own expense. His name will ever be remember-

ed with reverence and love by the people of this country. His remains are now in eternal rest in the cemetery near Bahisht Bagh.

Dr. Heber's time saw various improvements in furniture, surgical instruments and other things connected with the general developments of the Dispensary. He too was very popular with the public. Although he was a very busy man (having to attend a considerable number of patients daily) yet his love for literature is praiseworthy. He found time to write an interesting book entitled "In Himalayan Tibet", wherein he placed at the disposal of the public, his 12 years' experience of the country and its people.

Now after the lapse of a number of years, Dr. Miss Mary Shawe, the daughter of Dr. E. Shawe has assumed charge of this Dispensary. She is an M. B. Ch. B. of Leeds University and it is a real blessing for the people of this place to have the free aid and attendance of such a highly qualified medical woman. The want of a really competent lady doctor in such a far-off place, as Leh is, was keenly felt by the women-folk, and has been removed since her taking over the charge.

CHAPTER II

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR CUSTOMS

When one crosses the Zojila, the world seems to change entirely. He enters in a country where everything seems strange to his gaze. The hills around him are quite destitute of all vegetation and it is only at stray places that he comes across some poplars and willows that are the main trees that grow in this country. Vine, Apricots, Apples and Walnuts may be named as the only species of fruit trees that grow in the lower hotter regions. They are generally to be found from Nurulla downwards to the other side of the Indus up to Garkun in the Kargil Tehsil and on the other side in Nubra valley. The rest of the Tehsil is quite barren as regards the growth of fruits. Leh proper is extremely cold, so no fruits worth the name except apricots grow in that place.

“The present population of the country is the result of a long process of blending of at least three distinct people, two of which are of Aryan race, whilst one, which is numerically superior to the other two, is of Mongolian origin. The Aryan nations are the Dards of Gilgit and the Mons of North

India (perhaps from Kashmir). The Mongolian is the Tibetan nation". (Adapted from History of Western Tibet by A. H. Franke.)

"Of the races who inhabit the country Chanpa, Ladakhi and Balti form a sub-division of the Mongolian nation. The first two of these subdivisions are Buddhist in religion and the last is Mohamedan."

"Of the Aryan nation, the first race called Dards are found in a few villages in the lower valley of the Indus, being there interpolated between the Balties and Ladakhis. It is at these places that some Buddhist Dards occur. These form small and very much isolated communities." (See Drew's Jammu and Kashmir.)

"The second race belonging to the Aryan race are called Mons. Those who are Buddhists in religion are still called Mons, whilst those who are converted into Mohamedanism are called Bhedas". (History of Western Tibet by A. H. Franke.)

Such are the people of this country whose main trait of character is their simplicity and the hardiness with which they endure the severity of the climate. Though extremely poor, yet they are the people who laugh at their adverse circumstances, rather than, deplore their lot. They are cheerful, willing

and good tempered and are given very much to truth-telling. It is seldom that they resort to litigation, rather, it is only then, when they are forced to it. Chhang—a sort of country liquor—is their favourite drink and in fact without it they cannot live. This drink also finds its place even in their worships and no party or social function is a success without it.

Simple in habits, a Ladakhi's dress is also simple. It consists of a home-made woollen cloth, coarsely made and dyed in reddish black colour. It is generally in the shape of a loose overcoat locally called Gonches, folded over double in front and tied by a waist-band called Skirax. No underwear is used beneath this Gonches. They wear a special kind of shoes known as Pabboos which are made of woollen thread with leather soles beneath. In order to protect their feet and legs against cold they generally put on Namda (Felt) socks up to knees. For the headwear, they use a cap lined with fur and this cap covers the ears and the back of the head as well. This is all the accoutrement of a Ladakhi man while the women also wear a Gonches. But this Gonches differs a little from that worn by a man. Its cut is something like a loose gown whose skirt is gathered. Over the shoulders, she ties up a goat skin covering

her back with the hairs inside. This is an indispensable part of a woman's dress. It is used as a shawl and while it is considered to add to the decoration of the body it protects her against the cold and renders easy the carrying of a child. Weights are carried on the back instead of the head in this country. Her shoes are similar to those of a man. Her head-dress is a Pairak which is made of a strip of cloth studded with turquoises or shells which is worn from the forehead, back over the middle of the head and comes down to the back and lappets of black sheepskin attached to the plaited hair stand on both sides of the head as protection to the ears against cold.

The way in which these people have minimized their wants and necessities of life is admirable. It would be of interest to know something about their way of living. Unlike the people of other nationalities, they do not care what to eat or how to make it. Their staple food is giram or loose-grained barley which is produced in abundance in their own country. The barley-flour locally known as Sattu is generally mixed or added to their tea, known as Gur-Gur tea which too is prepared in a manner that deserves attention. Some tea with soda is put in water and the pan is placed on the fire till the whole water is

boiled away. Then some water is again poured into the pan and it is similarly finished. This process is repeated thrice until the tea has a red colour. Now this coloured water is strained and then put in a gurgur—a cylindrical wooden churn. After this some salt, milk and butter are put in this churn and a wooden rod having a circular shaped piece attached to the other end is moved freely up and down with great force so that all these ingredients may be properly mixed. When this is done, their tea is ready and cups are filled with it. The tea is sipped, and later sattu is put into some of it and made into dumplings which are eaten.

These people have three meals a day and their programme is so universal that it is observed without the least remissness in each and every Ladakhi house. Their first meal taken an hour or two after sunrise is known locally as Thsama. Tea and sattu are taken at this time. The second one known as Zara is taken at midday. Tea and sattu or Chhang and sattu are served at this meal. The third meal comes in the evening immediately after sunset and this is perhaps the best meal for which they observe some formalities of cooking. This is called Ghonzan and Thukpa or zan is served on it. Some water with an

agreeable quantity of salt in it is put in a utensil which is placed on the fire. When the water is hot, some slices of meat are put in it. When these have been boiled some whey is added and after that small quantities of rolled flour are put in and the saucepan is allowed to remain on the fire for some time. After this it is taken off and the contents are placed in a dish and eaten. Those who cannot afford to have meat add vegetables in its stead.

These people are not in the least particular to know what kind of meat they are taking. Rather, they are indifferent in this respect. Even the meat of sick and diseased animals who have died a natural death is taken by them. Like the people of other nationalities they do not slaughter their goats or sheep for food but they tie up the mouth of the animal with a strong cord and allow it to suffocate.

Their favourite drink is Chhang which is a light sort of beer made without hops. It finds its place in each and every home and no social function is a success without it. Persons of either sex take it and even children of tender age are not an exception. It, being made in their own country at no great expense, is consumed in great quantities. It is perhaps the only luxury of life in Ladakh. In order to make

it, they first boil some giram or loose-grained barley in water, after which the water is thrown away and the barley spread on a carpet of Yak's hairs. Then a tablet or two of "Fabs" which is a locally made compound of soda and Eurotia etc. is powdered and mixed with giram which is then put in a sack. This sack is then buried deep in Bhoosa (chaff) and allowed to remain there for three or four days when it begins to give off a sour smell. When this smell appears, they put the contents of the sack in a wooden cask, shaped like a drum, with a spout attached to the bottom. After putting the contents of the sack into this cask, they pour hot water from above which after three or four hours automatically oozes out of the spout. It is then filled into a pitcher. Then some hot water is again put in the cask which similarly is taken out after three or four hours. This process is repeated three times and then the contents of all the three pitchers are mixed together. This is now their Chhang, which does not require any formalities or special skill to make. It is thus within the reach of the rich and poor alike and this explains why it has found its way into every Ladakhi Buddhist's house.

There being great scarcity of timber and fuel in

this extremely cold country they cannot afford to use ordinary fuel as protection against cold or for daily cooking purposes in their kitchens. So they keep collecting dung of cattle which also they sparingly burn and though their room is filled with unbearable smoke, yet they do not mind it in the least. They have this consolation after all that they are sitting near the fire.

For nights, they have, practically speaking, no bedding at all. In their Gonches or overcoat of daily use they coil themselves up on a hard surface with a small piece of a sack or other cloth spread on the ground. For a pillow, they use a wooden frame called Nyashing, which rests on two small props in a sloping direction, against which they rest their head for the whole night.

The people of this country prefer to keep up to their old civilization. So far so that they have an ingrained belief that it is their own system of treating diseases that can effectively cure them of an illness. Their native physicians locally called Lharjey prepare their medicines from roots and herbs and their method of treatment resembles the "Ayurvedic" system in force in other parts of India. When a person falls sick he should either go to a Lama, or a Lharjey

or a Lhaba. If he goes to the Lama, he would request him to give him an amulet or some other sacred thing. The latter after consulting his pothi or religious book will either give him the requested amulet or direct him to perform some Puja (worship) or to see a Lharjey. The performance of Puja is proposed in cases in which it is guessed that the suffering person has come under the influence of some evil star or demon. If he goes to the Lharjey he will prescribe the necessary medicine after diagnosing the disease. Their main method of treating external troubles is scarification and internal ones is venesection in crude form. The system of venesection practised by these Lharjeys is that they place a small horn of a Yak on the diseased part, especially the aching portion, and from the open end of the horn they draw in the mouth, with great force ; and when they find some upheaval in the skin they apply the lance. This corresponds to cupping in Alopathy. In certain cases such as Rheumatism or pains, the Lharjeys prescribe a bath in some mineral spring or to drink water therefrom. These springs are scattered over in various parts of the Ilaqa, the most conspicuous being the one at Panamik. Panamik is a village on the Treaty High Road in the Nubra valley.

There are two springs situated at a distance of half a mile from the habitations of this village in the easterly direction. One of these contains cold water and the other is a sulphur spring having hot water. This sulphur spring gives off smoke. Both these springs are each a square of about two yards in length and breadth and one yard deep and stone slabs have been used in their constructions. Spouts have also been provided for the exit of water from these springs. Over these springs, two bath-rooms have also been constructed for the convenience of intending bathers. In the majority of cases, a Lharjey accompanies his patient to the spring where he himself tests the warmth of the water by mixing it with the water of the cold spring and then the patient takes his bath. They do not take a dip in the spring but bathe in front of it. It is said that if the dirtiest clothes be put in the spring they get automatically cleaned or if an egg is thrown in the spring it is of itself boiled after a short time.

For headaches, they generally cut the ear-lobule with a piece of broken glass.

A Lhaba is a person who is believed to be possessed by some deity and there is generally one Lhaba to be found in every village. In some cases two or

three adjoining villages have a common Lhaba. When a sick person goes to him he begins to prognosticate and tell by signs what has already happened. Then he says to the patient that he will cure him of the disease if it is possible for him to do, otherwise he suggests that he should perform some Puja (worship) or see some Lharjey or Lama. In the former case, he applies a small wooden pipe filled with some coloured water to the diseased part and then sucks up the water. After this he advises his patient to go home. Strange to say, that the persons treated in this way are stated to have shaken off their ailments. The saying, "faith moves mountains" appears to be literally true in the case of these people.

The books on the medical science of these people are written in the Tibetan language by the masters of the art. A person intending to take up the medical profession is usually sent to an experienced Lharjey where he has to learn by heart the text books proposed by his teacher. After he has done this, he is taught the method of preparing medicines from herbs and roots. Thereafter he is given some instructions to feel the pulse and some patients are placed under his charge for treatment. This is the final test of

his training and if he is successful in treating these patients he is declared fully qualified. To make known to the public that he has qualified himself as a Lharjey, a feast is held wherein all persons residing in the neighbouring villages are invited and Chhang is served and merriments made. At the end of this feast it is announced that henceforward their host is to be treated as a professional Lharjey.

These people have very strange customs some of which are so curious that one cannot but wish to learn about them.

The Dards of Dah stand at the top in this respect. They are very filthy people who do not wash their body from birth to death. They consider that God has made water only for drinking and if it is used for any other purpose, His wrath would come upon them and the supply of water would be reduced. They abhor the cow, and hen, and do not take cow's milk or eggs. They do not burn any lamp or use any other kind of light during nights. They go without any light during nights, for they consider that their deity (the Devi) would get displeased with them. Their mode of living is perhaps the filthiest of all nations in India, if not of the world. In one room they crouch together with their sheep and

goats and their rooms always give out an extremely obnoxious smell. Their houses, made generally of stones, have no outer doorways but are some feet high above the level. Going up to them is not an easy task. A wooden beam is placed with steps cut into it against the wall and over it a man has to hop like a bird.

In case of the birth of a child to a woman, she and her husband are confined to one room for 30 days and it is the husband who has to be more carefully looked after in this period than the ailing mother. He cannot get out of this room for these 30 days. This is not only with the Dards of Dah but all Bodh communities of this country. The way in which the Dards receive those to whom they mean to do honour, is also interesting. The ugliest women of the village collect at the entrance of the village with a handful of Sattu (barley flour) placed on iron plates (called Tawas) and have the musicians in attendance playing on flageolet and Dam Dam. The women stand in a line blocking the way and as soon as the personality for whose reception they have collected there, reaches near them they bow and present the Sattu on those plates. But it should be remembered that they are presented for show—not to be taken

and after this they break the line leaving a gap for the visitor to march onwards.

The system of reception accorded by the Ladakhis in other villages to those who have to be honoured by them differs a little from these Dards of Dah. In their case the villagers collect at the entrance of the village with musicians and Dam-Damwalas as well. Some women of the village in their brightest garments and best ornaments are also martialled in a line each holding a vessel containing country liquor (or Chhang) or some flour. As soon as the personality for whose reception they have assembled comes near them, they bow in the Ladakhi fashion and the musicians begin to play upon the flageolet and Dam-Dam.

Among the social practices of the Buddhists may be mentioned polyandry, divorce, widow marriage, inheritance and cremation of the dead.

The social liberty of the women of this country is complete and the status of freedom that they enjoy in society is nowhere the lot of womenfolk in India. They freely move about unveiled and mix openly in the social functions. With men they dance in public, and are in noway behind them in taking Chhang (or country liquor). They are the best

weight-carriers and in agricultural pursuits they are a great assistance to their husbands and brothers. It is they who have to look after the fields when the seed has been sown. So far it may be enviable to the women of India to see the womenfolk of this place enjoying such a good status, but all that glitters is not gold. The darker side of this beautiful picture is the practice of polyandry or plurality of husbands. It is the eldest brother in the family with whom a girl has to go through certain ceremonies of marriage and when they are performed she becomes not only the wife of him but of all his younger brothers. The children produced recognize all as their father, only differentiating them as elder or younger fathers. Thus if there are 5 brothers in a family, she becomes the wife of all the 5 brothers. The younger brothers have a very poor status in the family and they can rightly be termed as farm servants to their eldest brother, for they are the creatures of his will and subordinate to him in all respects. In addition to this form of polyandry, it is still astonishing to know that a woman does not remain confined to this number of husbands. She has the option, with the consent of the present eldest husband, to choose and bring in a stranger as assistant husband locally called "Phor-

sak''. He has the full status of a husband with her in the family and sometimes even greater than the real husband, for he being selected by herself, becomes her favourite. These cases are found in low class people but the practice is not illegal. Upon the death of the eldest brother, she becomes the wife of the living eldest brother by inheritance without performance of any marriage ceremonies. If she does not agree to live with him and his younger brothers as their wife, but does not like to leave the family, or the next younger brother of the deceased does not like to keep her as his wife, she is allowed a piece of land called Shrub-Zhing for maintenance. But this choice of becoming or not becoming the wife of the living eldest brother of the deceased must be decided at once by the woman on the death of her husband, and if she does not avail herself of this opportunity she becomes the legal wife of the living eldest brother without the performance of any marriage ceremonies and afterwards she can have no claim to disunion. There are two forms of marriage in vogue in this country. One of them is locally known as Bagma, according to which a girl after performance of marriage quits her parental home to live and settle in the house of her husband. This is generally in cases

where the father of the girl has male issues. The other is known as Magpa and according to it a husband is brought to the girl, to live for the whole of his life with his wife in her paternal residence. This is generally in cases wherein the father is either without male issues or has died without them.

A widow too has a right to bring a Magpa for herself to live with her in the house of her deceased husband. Remarriage of a widow does not affect her rights to inherit property of the deceased husband provided she takes a new husband as Magpa and does not leave his house and family. Such remarriages which take place frequently are generally contracted with the consent of the deceased husband's relations. Thus widow marriage is fully recognized in this country and even unchastity of a widow cannot affect her rights if she continues to be active in her household work.

I think it would be of interest to make some mention as to how a marriage is inaugurated between the parties by the parents and what ceremonies are generally performed on this happy occasion. At first the parents or guardians of the boy fix on a house their choice for a suitable match and then consult their astrologer locally called Onpo regarding the

proposed choice. If the astrologer finds from his calculations that the union would be a happy one and ominous for the parties and parents, the relatives of the boy approach the guardians or parents of the girl with some Chhang and Khatak (silk gauze). If the girl's parents favour this proposal, they tell them to come on a certain day with Chhang. On that day the other relatives will be invited with a view to know what they have to say in the matter. The relatives of the boy go home with an idea that there is a likelihood of the acceptance of the proposal. On the appointed day they again go with the necessary quantity of Chhang to the house of the girl and there in a general feast it is settled that the girl will be given in marriage. A day is also fixed for marriage in consultation with the Onpo and it is announced to the boy's relatives.

On the day fixed for marriage, a marriage procession is formed by the bridegroom's father and other relatives, accompanied by Neopas—a party of dancing men whose number varies from three to fifteen. It must be noted that the bridegroom does not accompany the procession, but on his behalf, a boy, from amongst his relatives, whose parents are alive, is selected to go with the procession to bring his

bride. When this party reaches the bride's house a dance is held around a heap of loaves methodically arranged in the form of an image and Lamas commence their Puja (worship). A feast is then given to the marriage party. After this feast the above-said boy who has come to fetch the bride gets up and places a Khatak round the head of the bride and holds her by the hand asking her to go with him. The bride begins to weep and thus commences embracing her various relatives present at that time. They one and all console her and name various articles such as clothes, ornaments, ponies, cows etc. which they offer to her as dowry. All the details of this dowry are recorded in a document, one copy of which is given to the bridegroom's father or guardian and the other retained by the parents of the girl. At this occasion Ome-Rin is demanded by the mother of the girl from the parents of the bridegroom. This is paid there and then and is usually a small sum. Ome comes from Oma meaning milk in Ladakhi dialect, and Rin is a Sanskrit word meaning debt, it also means price in the Ladakhi tongue. Thus Ome-Rin means compensation (milk debt) for fostering the bride.

After this ceremony the bride is taken to Chotkang

(temple in the house) where she bows before her Deities and prays for the long life and prosperity of her parents and begs permission to depart with a blessing for her own happiness. She then leaves the house in an orderly procession for the bridegroom's place, riding a pony or walking by foot. But it may be noted here that she can never afterwards in her life enter this temple, though she may visit her parents' house times without number.

When this procession arrives in front of the door of the bridegroom's house it is received there by two or more Lamas who recite some words and whirl round the head of the bridegroom an earthen pot containing useless residue of Chhang, tea etc. Then the Lamas write something with a piece of charcoal on a big stone against which this pot is broken to pieces. This ceremony is locally called Zab-Luk and is performed for shaking off any misfortune that may have come in the train of the bride. The party then sits down for a feast at which Chhang is copiously taken and dancing and music enjoyed for a considerable time. The bride then enters the door of the house but sits there with a pretence to return. The mother of the bridegroom then rushes down from upstairs and offering her some money and promising

good treatment requests her to come in the house. Then she gets up and is taken to the kitchen where she and her husband are seated on a white carpet whereon grain is spread before hand in the form of imaginary figures of two deities called Yungdung.

After this they dine together in the same dish. The boy who had gone to fetch the bride then comes with a silk gauze (locally called Goras) which he places around the head of the bridegroom. The younger brother or brothers if any of the bridegroom are then consulted as to whether they also wish to have goras tied to their heads. In case of their agreement a similar goras is tied to the head of each of the brothers by the same boy who placed it on the head of the bridegroom. This means that the bride will have the assistance of so many husbands. The younger brothers who refuse to have a joint goras with their elder brother are free to become a Magpa or Khanadamad in some other family. (A Magpa or Khanadamad is a son-in-law who lives in the house of his wife's father.) But those younger brothers who join in goras with their elder brother cannot go out as Magpas or marry another girl without the consent of their elder brother's wife.

When this ceremony of goras is over a dance is

held after which the bridegroom and the bride are taken to their bed-room where the goras is taken off their heads by the boy who tied it. Next day in the afternoon an open dance is held wherein the bride dances with females and the bridegroom with males. As soon as this dance is over the female relatives of the parties to the marriage give some Khataks and money to the bride and male relatives to the bridegroom. In this way the marriage ceremony is finished.

Divorce is also recognized in its entirety in this country, but it is important to note that no special ceremonies are required to make a valid divorce. As a husband can divorce his wife (Bagma), so is a wife, for whom a Magpa has been brought, entitled to divorce her husband. But in both the cases the divorcing party is bound to give to the divorced person a horse or its equivalent in money. The main grounds on which one of the parties can claim divorce are unchastity, impotency, infidelity, incompatibility of temper and indifference to household duties. But no proof of such shortcomings is essential to claim a divorce. If a husband changes his religion, it entitles the wife to divorce him, but a Bagma wife can, in no circumstances, change her religion, without

having obtained a divorce from her husband. But the Dards of Dah can change their religion without being divorced beforehand, and the inevitable consequences of such a change are that the marriage tie is, once for all, broken. All divorces are irrevocable, but in some cases they are made conditional. For example, a woman is in love with another person whom she wishes to marry but the husband objects. The divorce in this case would be conditional to the effect that she does not marry her paramour and if she does so the divorce would be revocable and the second marriage a nullity. Thus, under this conditional divorce, she can obtain a temporary release from the marriage tie to have her own way.

In some cases the boy and a girl mutually settle between themselves to contract a marriage and without the consent of their parents live together as husband and wife. Later, the girl is sent back to her father's house, though she, during this period, has become a mother of several children. Their parents then accord their approval and arrange a formal marriage which is celebrated with all ceremonies. This is known as a stealth marriage or a marriage by kidnapping.

The holding being indivisible in this country, suc-

cession to inheritance is regulated by the law of primogeniture. He or she, the only son or daughter, in case of a single issue of the deceased father, will inherit his property, but if a man has left more sons, the eldest of them will succeed, and in the case of his death, his eldest son, if any. But if the last landholder has left no son but more than one daughter, it is the eldest whom the customary law recognizes as the sole heir provided she has not been married as Bagma. In case of her death during the lifetime of her father, her issue will be the rightful heir to his maternal grandfather's property, the male always having preference over the female. A daughter married as Bagma can have no claim to inheritance whatsoever. In cases in which the eldest child has died during the lifetime of his father without leaving any issue, the eldest amongst those living will succeed. Amongst the Buddhists, the interest of a daughter is not temporary but she has rights of full inheritance whether married, unmarried or a widow.

These short notes about social practices of the Buddhists would be incomplete without a mention of the ceremony of the cremation of the dead which is as interesting as the others described in the fore-

going paragraphs. Like Hindus, the Buddhists also burn their dead, but quite unlike them, they do not set fire to them within 24 hours but keep the corpse for many days in the house for performance of Puja and certain other ceremonies. When a death takes place, it is the Phaspuns who have the exclusive right to touch or attend to the corpse. They gather round it and the head Lama holds the corpse by the hair and preaches a sermon, and so long as this sermon is not preached, none is allowed to touch the corpse. The body is then stripped naked by the Phaspuns and seated in a sitting posture as one sits for worship, with hands folded in front. It is then bound tightly with a string usually made of cloth and put in a cloth sack. The Lamas, generally 4 in number, are then ushered in to begin the Puja which lasts for several days. The richer the deceased is, the longer is his dead body kept in the house for performance of this Puja. The minimum number of days for this Puja is 4 and maximum 30 according to how far the weather permits the corpse to remain in a good condition. The Lamas and all others will take food in the house so long as the corpse is there, but the moment it is removed for cremation purposes, the house loses its sanctity and none but the Phas-

puns will take food there for a month after the cremation of the dead body. The Lamas, when they take food, set apart a small quantity as the dead man's share of meals which is afterwards given to the beggars or thrown to birds. Similarly when Chhang is taken by them or the members of the family of the deceased, a few drops are sprinkled on the ground for the dead man. All this is done in the belief that the food and Chhang will reach the deceased.

When the Puja is over, the Onpo or astrologer, augurs the names of the Phaspuns, who according to his calculations, appear to him ominous for the family to carry the pall. These Phaspuns are not related to the deceased through any blood relation but they constitute a common brotherhood with the deceased's family. In other words, the families who help each other in births, marriages and deaths are known as Phaspuns of each other.

The body, after announcements of the astrologer, is placed, in a small four-walled box-like bier or doli, which is carried on the shoulders by 4 Phaspuns from the house to the cremation premises ; friends, relatives and others accompanying it in a procession. There the body is taken out and after performance

of a Puja by the Lamas accompanying the funeral procession, it is placed in position for cremation in one of the already constructed stove-like structures in the cremation ground. The Phaspuns and relatives go round it in three circuits bowing each time in reverence to the dead. Then all except the Phaspuns and 2 Lamas retire and the body is set on fire. When it is totally reduced to ashes, a bone is taken out and placed in a dish containing grain. They then return to the house of the cremated person, in a procession headed by the Lamas, playing on the pipes. The dish is carried by one of the Phaspuns. There this bone is ground into powder and after performing some Puja and ceremonies it is mixed with some clay and metals and assigned to a utensil or repository of the bones of the dead. On the fourth day after the cremation ceremony, the relatives of the deceased and the Lamas betake themselves to the burning place and collect the remains and ashes which are afterwards thrown in some river or scattered on the hillsides. After this, Pujas extend over a period of 40 days or more, generally 49 days, each at an interval of a week from the other.

The most curious thing about these obsequies is that as soon as a death takes place, the body is be-

lieved to acquire a special sanctity to which only the Phaspuns have an exclusive right to touch. The husband is not allowed to see the dead body of his wife, nor the wife that of her husband. Similarly, no other relation of the deceased can claim a glimpse of his dead relation. It is only the Phaspuns who can see or touch the dead body.

Besides the Dards of Dah about whom I have said something in the foregoing paragraphs of this chapter, there is another singular community known as Changpas or Chanpas, which also deserves attention. They are a nomadic tribe who generally reside on high hills where cultivation is impossible. They have no lands but depend for their livelihood on their flocks of sheep and goats. They pass their whole life in tents made of Yak's hairs. These tents are peculiar in form being constructed in two pieces which are not closely united and are so put together as to leave an opening all along the top for the exit of smoke. If rain or snow falls a piece of cloth is spread over this opening to stop it from getting inside. These Changpas are found in the south-east end of Ladakh and the Ilaqa is known as Rupsho Ilaqa. This is an extremely cold part of the country but as there are excellent pasture lands, these Changpas do

not mind the severity of the climate. They hardly stay in one place for more than a month but move to places where the advancing season promises better pasture. In the vicinity of this Ilaqa there is a big lake comprised of three smaller ones known as Mindum Saga, Kalche Saga and Sag Saga which are situated in the territory of the Lhasa Government. From these lakes the salt is carried out of the country and grain is brought in on the backs of sheep which are of a large kind. These sheep are used as transport animals for all sorts of purposes. For riding these people generally prefer mules to ponies. Their language is different from Ladakhi and is locally known as Drogskat. They are a well-to-do folk who pass their winter at a place called Dora in Rupsho Ilaqa. Hardly any snow falls in this Ilaqa. Here they dig out hollows in ground generally two feet deep and place a row or two of bricks on the edge of this hollow. On these bricks they place all their belongings and then over them they pitch their tents. In this hollow they live unmindful of what goes on in the outer world. Like the other Buddhists of Ladakh they do not generally separate from their parents but live with them throughout their lives. The Bodhs of Ladakh generally separate from their aged

parents giving them a separate little house with some land for maintenance and parents so residing are known as Khaunpa. Their method of slaughtering an animal for food also differs from that of their brethren. They take an awl-like instrument and prick the liver of the animal through the ribs and then keep moving the animal until it expires. Their diet generally consists of cheese mixed with Sattu or giram-flour. They will only kill a sheep or goat when this cheese is not available. During the night they sleep on a bare surface and for a pillow they use their shoes (locally called Pubbus) or a small bag filled with hairs.

The way in which they desert their kith and kin in their last worldly moments is as astonishing as their other habits. When a Changpa falls seriously ill, all the members of his family leave him in the hollow and remove the tent from above and pitch it at a distance from the former place. Two or three persons are left behind to see how the sick man fares. If he dies he is left in the same pit to be eaten away by the birds and beasts of prey, and if he survives the malady, he gets up and joins their tent again. In the Rudak Ilaqa which is under the Lhasa Government, it is said that hired mercenaries are employ-

ed for carrying the dead. They carry the dead to a nullah where they place the corpse on a huge flat stone and then cut it to pieces by an axe or stone and afterwards scatter it on the same stone to be similarly eaten away by vultures and other birds of prey.

CHAPTER III

THE RELIGION OF THE PEOPLE

The heading of this chapter is likely to mislead, as it is apt to suggest that subtleties of religion and beliefs are going to be discussed therein. A word of elucidation is, therefore, necessary.

For such a delicate subject as religion is, it can only be the pen of an erudite scholar of the scriptures and other literature on the subject, that can be expected to bring out in proper form those intricacies which are the tissues of this fabric. But for a man like me, it is only possible to give a rudimentary idea of the outward bearing or general principles. It may, therefore, be stated that the treatment of the subject will be untechnical and without scientific pretence and will be confined to a rough outline of this complicated subject. I, therefore, leave it for the reader to draw his own conclusions.

The prevailing religion of Ladakh is Buddhism which has its fountain-head in Lhasa in Tibet.

The educated and more enlightened may possess some knowledge of the philosophy of their religion but the general bulk of the population is entirely

under the sway of the Lamas (Monks) in whom they see not only their advisers and guides but their saviours from the pangs of suffering and the liberators from the evils of transmigration. These Lamas thus play a very important part in religion, and their influence pervades every phase of a Buddhist Lada-khi's life. These Lamas are recluses, who are supposed to lead a life of celibacy and to pass it in the study of scriptures, devotion and self-abnegation. They generally reside in Gunpas or Monasteries which are the only religious institutions in this country. Near each village one comes across several long and wide built-up stone walls covered with thousands of flat thin stones bearing holy inscriptions. These, known as Manies, are to be found in every village and sometimes by the roadside. Keeping them always on the right, a passer-by is calculated to acquire for himself religious merit. In a few places, one may see gigantic figures carved in the rock that represent some god. All these things are in themselves signs to show the people's regard for their religion.

The Monasteries possess agricultural muafi lands, the produce of which and the grain collected by Lamas at harvest time are the chief source of their maintenance, besides the offerings made by the de-

votes. Cattle-breeding, trade and banking also go to add to their income. They are managed by a well organized hierarchy of priests with the Skushok as their spiritual head. The following may be named among the office-bearers :—

SPIRITUAL SECTION

1. Skushok—An incarnation of some saint.
2. Lobon—An abbot.
3. Chos-Timpa—Controller of the Lama meetings.
4. Chhomspun—Director of religious dances.

TEMPORAL SECTION

1. Chhagzod—Treasurer.
2. Nyerchhen—Steward.
3. Nyerpa—Storekeeper.
4. Phi-Nyer—Farm-Steward.

The Skushok is the main hinge of this administrative machinery and his words are law for everybody in the Gunpa. He is the monarch of all he surveys and there is none to dispute his right. He possesses powers of appointment and dismissal of all office-bearers. But he himself is a personality who is neither appointed or elected by anybody, nor does he succeed to his office by inheritance. He is always

reborn in the Buddhist community according to their belief in the doctrine of the transmigration of souls. As he walks along, all Buddhists take off their caps and bow in reverence. He raises his hand and touches their heads giving them blessings.

When a Skushok dies, all Lamas feel that a gem is lost and they all assemble in the main prayer hall to settle through whom to apply for a successor to the great Lama at Lhasa. It is generally the Chhagzod who has to make this application, but in case of his unfitness or absence, some other capable Lama is entrusted with this delicate duty. When this application reaches the great Lama of Lhasa, he tells them in reply that their late Skushok is reborn in such and such a village and in such and such a house. To locate the house properly he indicates the direction to which its door lies, and if there be a dog in the house its description is also given. The name of the mother, the number of cattle and their description are also delineated. On this data the applicants proceed and call upon their new Skushok who, though an infant, converses with them in a befitting manner. Thereafter, they bring some things that belonged to him before his rebirth and place them before him mixed up with some articles belonging to

other persons. He, it is said, recognizes his own articles, and this is the final test of his identification. After this, he when old enough is brought to rule over his own lamasery. In cases, in which according to the calculations of the great Lama at Lhasa, a deceased Skushok has not yet been reborn, he will tell them the fact, and advise them to prolong their vigils and perform their Pujas (worship) with greater austerity, so that the calamity that has befallen them may disappear and their Skushok may again appear early in human form. The Buddhists are thus staunch believers of the doctrine of the transmigration of souls.

Their conception of Divinity seems to be to believe in Konchoksum—a combination of three precious elements (Tri Ratna), which are (a) Sangyas Konchok (Sakhi Muni Gautama Buddha) (b) Chhos Konchok (the principles of Dharma inculcated by their Lord Buddha) and (c) Gendun Konchok (the congregation of Lamas following this culture). Idolatry is another trait of their religious faith and it is not only the idol of Gautama Buddha that is worshipped, but there are other innumerable deities at whose altar they have to pay their homage.

There are two main subdivisions in Buddhism, the

one is called Henayana or little vehicle and the other Mahayana or great vehicle. The first is represented by the sect of the yellow-robed Lamas while the other by red-robed Lamas. The yellow-robed preach the doing of good to all and shunning of evil, while the red-robed take the world to be an illusion or mirage where all are equal. As a general principle, according to Buddhism all are equal and it is the acts of each individual that will go to determine his ultimate lot. The yellow sect Lamas are the more reformed and are not religiously allowed to drink Chhang, or keep or marry a female. They can be likened to the protestants of the Christian faith or the Arya Samajis of the Hindu community. But the other sect has no such restrictions or formalities in its beliefs.

The Buddhists are very superstitious people and as such have a great faith in the influence of stars over the affairs of man and, therefore, follow the dictates of Astrology. Their Onpo is their astrologer and astronomer combined who when consulted foretells the future events by readings from his Pothe or book on the subject. In all matters of birth and death, marriage and divorce, sickness and calamity his consultations are indispensable. He first tells

them under what planetary evil influence they have come and then shows them the way to get over it, by the performance of certain Pujas (worship) and his directions are followed to the very letter. No attempt is made to enquire how and why this unpropitious circumstance has befallen them, but when he says that they are under it, the only query is how they can shake it off. Sometimes he advises them to put up small flags with a cloth or paper attached to the flagstaff on which some “Mantras” (incantations) are written, on the top of the house or on high hills. The object in so doing is that the flutter of this banner by the wind would secure for them religious merit whereby the calamitous forces would automatically be conquered.

S. Yaguchi
cultural officer
Leh.

CHAPTER IV

LOCAL FESTIVALS

The people of this country, though extremely poor, are nevertheless cheerful, willing and good-tempered. Even in adversity they are not seen in dejected spirits but they join in all merriments of their country. Winter, in fact, is the season selected for these merrymakings, as during that season no work is possible outdoors as all the fields are covered with snow. So they pass their winter in local festivals. It would be of interest for a visitor to this strange country to know what the festivals are like and when they fall. The following table shows, the names of various festivals with approximate dates of their annual celebrations and the number of days for which they are held :—

Serial No.	Name of festival.	Probable dates of their annual celebration.	Number of days for which they are held.
1.	Mela Losar.	19th to 22nd December.	3
2.	Mela Spituk Gunpa. ...	16th and 17th January.	2
3.	Mela Trikse Gunpa ...	5th and 6th February	2
4.	Mela Dosmochhey	15th to 20th February	5
5.	Mela Phiang Gunpa. ...	15th and 16th February.	2
6.	Mela Mashro Gunpa. ...	In the first week of March.	2
7.	Mela Chimrrey Gunpa ...	In the first week of November.	2
8.	Mela Hemis Gunpa. ...	Somewhere between the middle of June and 15th July.	2
9.	Mela Sheh Shubla	In the last week of August.	2
10.	Puja Kagyur Stangyur...	Some day between the middle of February and 15th May.	4

(1) *Mela Losar.*

‘Losar’ literally means new year and as a matter of fact it should come after the 12th month of the Tibetan calendar, but it is celebrated in the tenth month which according to the English calendar is the month of December. The main reason for these new year’s festivities being inaugurated in the tenth month seems to be that by the end of November they have harvested their crops and their sheep and goats are

comparatively fatter and better fed in this month than in any other month of the year. Thus the condition of the people is also normally good at this time and they are in proper spirits to enjoy the merri-makings. The festivities of Losar commence with the 25th day of the tenth month which in its ceremonies can be likened to the Hindus' Diwali day. During the evening, from dusk and up to a fairly late hour in the night, they illuminate their houses and places of worship with as many Indian lamps or candles as they can afford to have and this is again repeated on the night of the 30th day of the same month. This 30th night is the day of general rejoicings when the Raja,—a descendant of the former rulers of Ladakh, holds in his old palace at Leh a general feast which is partaken of by the survivors of the families of old Ministers and the local gentry of the town. Next morning, all those, who had joined the feast the previous night, come with a silk gauze, (locally called Khatak) to pay their homage to the Raja. The Khatak is placed round his neck and then obeisance is made by bowing the head and touching his feet with hands in the Tibetan fashion. But it is only the males that come for this obeisance and the tender sex are not required to come at all.

After this ceremony, which may be termed as the mock acknowledgment of a former glory, they all proceed to the Thakchen of which I have already given some description in chapter I under the head local administration. The Raja and the survivors of the families of former ministers sit in a balcony provided for the purpose and the rest of the audience sit in different places round about according to their social status in life. The Takchos or dancing girls commence their dance but the Dam Damwalas in attendance are not the ordinary Dam Dam people but they belong to a special band maintained by the Raja. This dance lasts for a sufficiently long time and is the closing ceremony for that day. The next day finds the Raja, and such members of his audience who possess ponies, taking rounds of the various Manies situated in the precincts of the Leh town. The Raja on that day wears his crown and the best garment that he possesses. After this, they, marching in a procession headed by the Raja, come to the main Bazar where the Raja enters a building of his own and the rest of his retinue begin horse-race in the Bazar. This horse-race is continued for three successive days. At the close of the horse-races, they all again assemble at the door of the Raja's

place in the bazar and then take him in a procession to his old palace. There again the Takchos commence their dances. This dancing continues for ten days from 3 P. M. to 6 P. M. daily and that is the last ceremony of the New Year's festivities.

(2) *Mela Spituk Gunpa.*

This festival comes off on the 25th day of the 11th month of the Bodhi calendar corresponding to the month of January of the Gregorian calendar. The monks or Lamas of the Spituk Gunpa, which is situated in the Spituk village at a distance of 5 miles from Leh, commence their puja or worship on the 25th and end on the 27th. On the 28th and 29th, the Lamas perform various masked dances which too are a section of their puja. It should be remembered that all these dances are not merely to be attributed to merrymakings but that they are an important part of the Puja's ceremonies. All this Puja is performed to conquer an imaginary devil called Drud who is supposed to be an evil spirit inimically disposed towards the Gunpa (Monastery) and the country at large.

An effigy of barley flour coloured black is made and various parties of Lamas in different masks come and dance around it so that this effigy may be con-

quered. At last the effigy falls and then it is carried outside the Gunpa with Dam Damwalas playing a special tune and then set on fire in the presence of all the audience.

(3) *Mela Trikse Gunpa.*

This festival is celebrated on the 18th and 19th day of the 12th month of the Bodhi year. The ceremonies are much the same as those of the Spituk Gunpa, but the masks used in various dances are quite different from those used in the dances of that Gunpa. The Skeleton dance of this Gunpa is world famous. The actors or Monks wear clothes of silk embroidered with different forms of human bones and when they dance, it seems to the eye that it is skeletons that are at play.

The Trikse Gunpa is well known for its costly uniforms, wigs and faces and the nicety of manner in which its dances are performed.

(4) *Mela Dosmochhey.*

This commences on the 25th day of the 12th month of the Tibetan Calendar. From 25th to 27th, the Lamas or Monks of Phiang and Mashro Gunpas continue to perform their puja and dances. Then on the 28th and 29th days, they betake themselves to dance in a compound which is situated in front of the

old palace of the former rulers of Leh at a little distance from it. In the afternoon on the 29th, they all march in a procession headed by the Raja wearing his crown and the gayest clothes to the open space situated opposite to the Mohamadan graveyard near the P. W. Rest House. There, a big effigy of the Devil called Dosmochhey is fixed to the ground by the help of ropes tied with pegs. This effigy is made up of woollen thread and timber and stands at a considerable height from the ground. This now forms the central figure round which the rest of the programme of this festival's ceremonies takes place. Five or six small funeral pyres are made around it in a circle whereon the Lamas place their effigies of various devils and set fire to them and then begin dancing and performing puja. After they have been reduced to ashes, comes the turn of this monstrous effigy, which, from a distance soon looks like the ruins of a burned down wooden tower. The musicians playing at their flageolets a special mourning tune proceed to it and as soon as they finish one tune they cut one rope and with the finish of the second tune cut the other rope until this devil falls prostrate to the ground. The audience rush to it to take the various parts of its body as the trophies of war. They con-

sider that the placing of these trophies in their granaries adds to the wealth of the family. After this horse-racing is held for three days in the Bazar like the one held at Losar. This race is not organized for the 30th but from 1st to 3rd of the next month.

(5) *Mela Phiang Gunpa.*

This festival is celebrated on the 18th and 19th of the first month of the Tibetan year. The ceremonies are similar to those of Spituk and Trikse Gunpas. The only difference is the diversity of masks and costumes put on by the actors. The Monks of this Gunpa belong to the red sect who are free-thinkers and consider that the world is a place "to eat, drink and be merry".

(6) *Mela Mashro Gunpa.*

This festival is held on the 14th and 15th day of the first Tibetan month, and the devil-dances and other functions are similar to those gone into in the fairs of Phiang and Trikse Gunpas. The distinguishing feature being, that two gods called "Lha", make their appearance in the closing act of this festival. They are not effigies or imaginary personalities, but two monks are made to represent the gods in queer and astounding raiment with awe-inspiring

demon faces. These Lamas or monks, before appearing in public as representing the gods, have to undergo a puja for 30 days continuously before the fair, so that the real gods may come into their bodies. On the last day of the fair, they show themselves in public, when those who have to name their children come and beg for names. The children are then given various names by these supposed gods. But it should be remembered that these names are announced according to some astronomical calculations, whose efficacy and good results for the children, are explained to the blind believers (parents).

As a matter of fact, the naming ceremony is generally performed by the Skushoks but it is only the gods of this Gunpa who have this privilege besides the Skushoks. No other Gunpa can name the children.

(7) *Mela Chimrrey Gunpa.*

This is known as Angchok Chimrrey festival and is held on the 18th and 19th day of the 9th month of the Tibetan calendar. It is alternately held at Hemis and Chimrrey villages. This is the only Gunpa wherein dances are also performed during the night while in all other gunpas they are never performed after sunset. In this Gunpa, the Lamas dance during

the day in their ordinary clothes while after sunset, their performances commence in gaudy and curious costumes with strange masks and wigs. These Lama dances are organized in a specially provided room known as Dukhang Hall, and they last until a very late hour of the night.

(8) *Mela Hemis Gunpa.*

In this land which is inhabited by happy, attractive and simple folk, demonology is the most predominating factor and what is the worst of it, it is not an idiosyncrasy but a firm belief introduced into religion. Thus these devil-dances, which appear to the people of other nationalities as mere pastimes, are not seen in that aspect by a Buddhist ; but they are to him an essential ceremony without which no worship, however austere, can be of any avail. These, therefore, have a deeper significance for him and he is even sober and serious at their humorous details. Lamaism seems to be the dictator of their destinies, and the words of a Lama, however, inconsistent and unbelievable they may be to a man of common sense, are nevertheless law for him. All these practices which I have described in the foregoing paragraphs as festivals, are, no doubt, merely festivals to us, but to a Buddhist, they are an indis-

pensable part of his religious ceremonies. Of all these festivals, the one, that is performed at Hemis, finds a unique place in the life of this extraordinary country. It is held on the tenth day of the fifth Buddhist month corresponding to some day between the middle of June and 15th July. It is solemnized in honour of the birthday of Padma Sambhawa, the founder of Lamaism, who is still believed to be the incarnation of the great Buddha.

Almost all the festivals of various Gunpas fall in winter but it is the Hemis fair alone that comes off in summer. The later it falls, the more European spectators are enabled to enjoy its really surprising functions.

Hemis Monastery is the greatest, richest and oldest in the country. It is situated at a distance of 24 miles from Leh via Chughlamsar and 30 miles via Igu bridge. Chughlamsar is a village at a distance of 5 miles from Leh and there, there is a bridge to cross the river. After crossing this bridge a visitor has to pass over a long bare plain for about 16 miles whence he has to go uphill for 3 miles to reach the Monastery. In case he does not wish to take this long march in one day, he can break his journey in the beautiful village of Chushot, some

8 miles from Leh which has many attractive camping grounds in the gardens. By the other way which falls on the other bank of the river he can stop at Trikse which is a big village at a distance of 12 miles from Leh. Here too is an old Monastery known as Trikse Gunpa which cannot but be of interest to a new comer in this country. It is situated on a high hill and opens to the view from a great distance. From Trikse the 2nd march is quite easy to the Monastery at Hemis.

Near the Monastery is a lovely little garden, which is assigned by the Skushok for the camps of European visitors to this Monastery. This festival lasts for two days, and has such an interesting and busy programme of various mystic plays, that no visit to Leh, can be said to be complete without having witnessed this fair.

In the compound of the huge edifice of this monastery there is a balcony facing the main entrance which is set apart for the accommodation of European visitors and distinguished guests of the Skushok. The visitors should, however, take their own chairs to this balcony.

On the last or second day of this fair, those who wish to make any offering to the Monastery or any

present to the Skushok, are presented with a register, wherein the amount presented, together with the name and address of the presenter are entered. This register is entitled the register of guests to the Monastery.

The Skushok of this world-famous Monastery is very hospitable and a gentleman of very pleasing manners. He himself sees to every detail connected with the convenience of Europeans and other distinguished guests to his Monastery. He details off a number of his servants, for all these things, who have to act according to his instructions. He has travelled much in India and is to all appearances a man of refined taste and habits.

✓ Though the Hemis festival is celebrated annually in honour of the birthday of Padma Sambhava, yet the underlying object for its celebration, according to the religious belief of the Buddhists, is said to be to rule out of power the evil influences which might cast their effect on the peace and prosperity of the people. The Pujas (worship) performed at this occasion, are believed to be a salutary safeguard against the prevalence of calamities and diseases in this land of superstitious people. It is annually celebrated with great pomp and show, but every

twelfth year the festivities are inaugurated with special eclat, which may be termed the special occasions in the history of this festival. In that year, certain garments, idols and other important articles of Puja (worship), which remain locked for 12 years in wait for that time, are displayed. That occasion now falls in 1932 A. D.

The programme of the performances in this mystery play begins at 5 a. m., on the first day of the festival, when a big silken curtain, measuring about 50 by 20 ft., beautifully embroidered with the image of Drukpa Rinpochey is suspended from the cornice of the three-storied wall of the main gate of the Monastery. This comes down to the said gate, covering the whole of the upper portion of the wall. Drukpa Rinpochey is the head of this Buddhist sect. At the time of suspending this curtain, all the lamas assemble before the gate with every article of Puja (worship) and play upon their flageolets and other instruments of music known as Gialing, Tung, Rolmo etc. Later, the lamas, whose number varies from 30 to 40, make their appearance at 9 a. m. They come and sit in the space just below the balcony, set apart for the accommodation of Europeans and other distinguished guests. This place, where

lamas sit, is nicely decorated with carpets and choktse (small Ladakhi tables). In the middle of this space, they set up a raised platform, which is similarly adorned for the Skushok. The lamas sit on the carpeted-floor in a straight line on both sides of this platform. As their duties, in the performances to follow, are those of an instrumental band, so the various instruments of music are methodically arranged in a line, in front of them.

After the lamas and the Skushok have taken their seats, two young lamas with masks representing a demon called Hatuk run out of the main gate of the Monastery and are shortly after joined by 16 more masked figures wearing black caps called “Janakpa” (black-capped people) and “Chhamchit”. They all begin to dance in the main compound. This lasts for about half an hour. Thereafter, a party of 16 lamas, wearing brass caps representing some deities called Rikma or Katinchan (favourably disposed deities) makes its appearance, and after dancing for half an hour retires by the main gate. Soon after 9 more lamas wearing artificial faces of a demon called Guru “Chhen-gyet” and striking garments come in the compound. Immediately after this, the “Rakima” or “Katinchan”, again hurry up to the scene and

they all sit in a line on the floor where carpets are spread beforehand for them. The "Chhen-gyet" sit on a bench and perform some Puja. When this Puja (worship) is over 4 more figures representing a god called Spao come and dance before them for 5 minutes or so. Then the "Spao" retire and their place is taken by 5 more masked actors representing a goddess known as Spamo who similarly come and dance for about 15 minutes, eulogizing at the same time, the actions of Guru Chhen-gyet. After this they return, whereupon "Chhen-gyet" and "Rikma" begin to dance and recede in rows of two. It is generally 12 by this time, and the programme for the morning performances is over. For an hour, the performances are stopped, by way of recess, for allowing the lamas to take their meals.

At one O'clock in the afternoon, all the lamas come again and take their seats below the balcony whereupon 4 masked figures called Turdak appear in the compound, holding in their hands, a wooden plate, rectangular in form, containing an human-shaped effigy, of a devil called Dao, made of sattu and butter. They place this plate on the ground and begin to dance and perform Puja (worship) around it. This lasts for a few minutes, after which

they go back. Soon after they are succeeded by 2 figures representing a god called “Jing Skyong” and shortly after they are joined by 14 more masked actors, who continue dancing for an hour or so. On their retirement Lobbons (Abbots) of Hemis and Chimrrey Monasteries accompanied by two masked figures, all of whom are wearing Janaks (black caps) make their appearance and after performing Puja of a god called “Ser-kyam”, withdraw. Then 5 more monstrous figures, known by the name of “Chhoke-Len”, enter the arena and begin to dance. They are soon joined by 9 more masked actors wearing stag-headed masks representing a god called “Shiva Rucho” (Shiva Rucho in Ladakhi dialect means a Stag head). They all dance together, and after performing some Puja, cut to pieces “Dao” with a sword and then retire, exhilarated at their success in having conquered this devil. Thereafter 10 more lamas, with queer masks and quaint garments representing the figure of a god called Sking, rush out of the main gate and dance in the compound for an hour. It is by this time 6 in the evening, and this in fact is the closing ceremony for the first day. When these “Skings” retire, the curtain that was suspended in the morning is also removed.

✓
The early hours of the morning of the next day, find the Lamas similarly suspending another curtain of the same size as of the previous day embroidered with the image of Skushok Gial Sras. He was the man, who got the whole former building of the Hemis Monastery, dismantled and reconstructed in the existing form. Gial Sras in Ladakhi tongue means the son of a Raja. It is thus that he has immortalized his name, which explains for itself, why this curtain, with his likeness on it, is suspended on this ceremonial occasion. Then at 9 a. m., as on the previous day, after the Lamas have taken their seats under the balcony, 2 "Hatuks", run into the compound and begin to dance. They are immediately joined by 16 "Chhamchit" and "Janakpa" (black-capped people) and dance for about half an hour. Then they all retire. After this there is a pause up to 3 in the afternoon, as during these hours all the lamas and Skushok assemble in the main Puja Hall. There they sit before the statue of a god called Giapo and make offerings of dried fruits and other eatables and perform Puja (worship). This Puja lasts a little over two and a half hours.

At 3 p. m. all the lamas come out of this Puja Hall and betake themselves to their seats beneath

the balcony again. Soon after this a party of 18 masked dancers makes its appearance, out of whom two will be seen wearing similar masks and garments. Of the remaining 16, the members of a group of 4 resemble each other in masks and clothes. They dance in groups of 4 and then all return together after dancing for an hour or so. They are immediately after succeeded by 4 Turdaks who appeared in the first show of the afternoon performances of the previous day. They come with the "Dao" as on the preceding day and after dancing and performing Puja for some time go back. Then 18 masked dancers, in quaint garments, who are known by the name of Chhushong-Yungzuk, appear on the scene and after dancing for some time, one of them cuts to pieces "Dao" and then they all retire. Then enter 11 grotesquely masked figures called Achara who have blue helmets on their heads and leopard and tiger skins tied to their waists. They dance and perform Puja for about half an hour. Then suddenly serious details develop into comic ones. Now comes in a fat figure who can hardly walk. He is known by the name of Hashang Gyapo, who has a big quaint mask of a demon face, quite out of proportion to the rest of his body. He is attended by

a party of 6 or 7 rascally children wearing pink masks. He holds a rod in his hand with which he thrashes his attendants and some of the local peasantry sitting near about. As his strokes barely hurt anybody, he is laughed at and jeered at. He elicits laughter from any side he turns his attention to. As a matter of fact, he is the buffoon of the whole show whose arrival in the courtyard is hailed by the whole crowd with laughter. His appearance is a signal to show that the festival is shortly to be over now. After dancing and playing for some time at 6 in the evening he withdraws with his party, whereafter the audience also disperse and the curtain is removed.

It is a point to be noted that all these dances are performed in the festival after rehearsing for them throughout the year. The grand rehearsal is held without masks and garments on the day just preceding the one on which the festival commences. This rehearsal is known locally as "Dig" and previous rehearsals are called "Chhamjang." Without these rehearsals it would be simply impossible to perform such organized dances, some of which are really very interesting. The various methods according to which these dances are organized are given in a

Tibetan book entitled “Chham-yik”. If any actor commits a mistake in gait or observance of these instructions in the course of his dances, he is given corporeal punishment after the festival by a Lama called “Chhos-thrimpa”.

(9) *Mela Sheh Shubla*.

This festival may rightly be termed as the harvest thanksgiving festival. It is held in the village of Sheh at a distance of 8 miles from Leh on the 10th of the 7th Tibetan month. At one time there was no Gunpa in that village, but the present building, styled as Sheh Gunpa, was the residence of a concubine of one of the former rulers of Leh. On her death, this palace was turned into a Gunpa and from that time it has been used as such and it is in the compound of this building that this festival is celebrated. It is not the Lamas that dance in this festival, but the village folk, males and females together, in their best wearing apparel and gayest ornaments. As this fair also comes in summer, somewhere at the end of August or beginning of September, the various parties are seen in different gardens where they sing, dance, eat, drink and are merry. At the appointed hours they betake themselves to dancing in the compound of the Gunpa and the rest of the day and night they enjoy in the gardens.

The religious sanctity of this fair is said to be the presentation of the first ear of corn to the statue of a god called Dorjey Chhemmo whose huge figure stands in one of the rooms of the Gunpa. Every Zemindar is bound by religion to present the first ear of the corn of his crop to the god and unless he has done it, he cannot cut or harvest his crop. If he contravenes this direction the wrath of God they believe will descend upon him and he will be ruined in the course of a few years.

(10) *Puja Kagyur Stangyur.*

It is a special Puja (worship) performed annually at Government expense, on some day between the middle of February and the 15th of May. The reason for its performance at this time is said to be, that the Buddhist year ends by the middle of February, so the Puja is performed at the close of the current and the commencement of the new year. The Lamas (monks) of almost all the Gunpas (Monasteries) of the Tehsil take part in this Puja, excepting a few ones, whose Lamas are precluded to come, on account of the close of way, due to snow. The number of Lamas assembling at this occasion at Leh is generally about 400, who have to finish the reading of 308 Pothies (religious books) in 4 days.

Two hundred of these books are known as Stangyur, while 108 go by the name of Kagyur, each Pothe comprising about 5 or 6 hundred pages. The uttering aloud of these books and the performance of the ceremonies prescribed therein, are conducted under the personal supervision of the Skushok of the ✓ Phiang Monastery. He, besides reading some books himself, makes two effigies of the devils known as Marchhin Storma and Storlok. On the last day of the Puja, these two effigies are taken out in a procession outside the town in the open plain near the P. W. Rest House. There in the presence of the local officers and the gentry, who sit in a tent, and other spectators who come from far and near to witness this ceremony, Marchhin Storma is set on fire. Thereafter, Storlok (made in an human form) is fixed to the ground and a horn filled with blood is suspended at a distance from it in a conspicuous position to a thread tied to 2 little poles standing parallelly. The gunners then fire 5 guns and begin musketry aiming their shots at the horn, which will continue, until it is broken and blood comes out of it. Then comes the turn of Storlok who is similarly raised to the ground. All this is done in the belief

to drive off evil spirits and misfortunes from the country.

The Lamas after this ceremony assemble again in the Puja Hall and pray for the long life and everlasting reign of H. H. the Maharaja Bahadur. Thereafter, some prizes in cash are distributed to the Lamas, the amount varying according to the status and grades of the various Lamas. The main object for the inauguration of this Puja is to offer prayers for the longevity of His Highness' life and to invoke Heaven's blessings for his prosperity. These prayers last for 4 days during which the Puja continues, when on the last day, they are offered in a congregation led by the Phiang Skushok. The idea underlying this Puja is praiseworthy, as it is in itself a manifestation of the feelings of loyalty and faithfulness to the Kashmir crown. Everybody looks forward with an eager eye to the day when this Puja will next be performed. The Lamas keep specially in wait for this day when they would be able to devote some time in praying for his good, under whose glorious reign they have been the recipients of all worldly comforts. Thus it is in itself a special Puja, having a noble object, the like of which, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find in another country.

CHAPTER V

JOURNEY FROM SRINAGAR TO LEH

This beautiful little town which attracts so many visitors from various far-off countries is situated at a distance of $242\frac{1}{4}$ miles from Srinagar, which is the summer Capital of His Highness' Government and which may be called the starting point for Leh. A visitor can reach Leh by three different routes as detailed in statements (a) (b) and (c) below.

The details of the stages and the number of miles intervening between each are as follows :—

ROUTE (a)

Name of Stage	Distance in miles	Height above Sea level	REMARKS
1. Srinagar ...	0	5,235 ft.	Has Post and Telegraph Offices and Hotel.
2. Ganderbal ...	13	5,230 ft.	Has Post and Telegraph Offices and a Rest house. This stage can be done by a boat, motor, lorry or Tonga. In fact a motor or lorry can go up to Violo bridge at a distance of 6 miles from Ganderbal, wherefrom the bridle path com- mences.
3. Kangan ...	11		Rest House and Post Office.
4. Gund ...	13		Rest House and Post Office.
5. Sonamarg ...	14½		Post and Telegraph Offices and Rest House.
6. Baltal ...	9	9,450 ft.	Rest House.
Cross Zojila with 11,578 ft.			
7. Matayan ...	15½	11,000 ft.	Rest House.
8. Drass ...	12½	9,825 ft.	Rest House, Post and Telegraph Offices.
9. Shamsa Kharbu	22½		Rest House.
10. Kargil ...	16½	8,787 ft.	Rest house, Post and Telegraph Offices and a Hospital and an old fort.
11. Mulback ...	22½		Rest House.
Cross Namika pass with 13,000 ft.			
12. Bodh Kharbu	14½	11,890 ft.	Rest House.
Cross Fotola with 13,400 ft.			
13. Lamayuru ...	15	11,520 ft.	Rest House.
14. Nurulla ...	18¾		Rest House.
15. Saspul ...	15¾		Rest House.
16. Nimu ...	11½		Rest House.
17. Leh ...	17¾	11,500 ft.	Telegraph and Post Of- fices, Hospital and Rest House.

N. B. (1) There is between No. 6 and 7 another place known as Machoi situated at a distance of 9 miles from Baltal. There too is a Rest House and visitors proceeding from Sonamarg may stop there instead of going to Matayan. From Machoi they can go direct to Drass. A winter season telegraph office is also maintained at Machoi from 15th October to 15th June every year.

(II) From Lamayuru at a distance of 12 miles, there is a village known as Khalatse, where there are Post and Telegraph offices, a Rest House and a Civil Dispensary. Here in this little village, on the road near the bridge, in a lovely state garden, lies a beautiful building wherein resides the Moravian Missionary, Rev. H. Kunick. The very look of the manse, gives the looker-on an idea of contentment and an atmosphere of calmness and quietitude prevails in all around. Mr. and Mrs. Kunick have been rendering very useful service to the village folk. Before the opening of a Government dispensary there, they were the only people to give medical aid to the people of the locality.

Thus a visitor can also stop at Khalatse and avoiding a stay at Nurulla, proceed direct to Saspul, at a distance of 21 miles from Khalatse.

ROUTE (b)

Name of stage	Distance in miles	Height from sea level	REMARKS
1. 			The same stages from Srinagar to Kargil as shown in statement (a) above.
2. Kargil ...	0	8,787 ft.	
Cross Lalung pass or Hambuting La, with 13,500			
3. Silmon ...	12		No Rest House in any of these stages and the visitor will have to make all arrangements necessary for his stay <i>en route</i> . Transport can, however, be secured under the Res system.
4. Garkun ...	10		
5. Achina Thang	16		
6. Dumkhar ...	13		
7. Khalatse ...	11		

From No. 7 the visitor can proceed to Leh by the main road *vide* last para under N. B. II to statement (a). The advantage of taking the route as described in (b) above is that this part of the country is comparatively hot and only one pass is to be crossed which is not so high as the passes of Namika and Foto on the main road. This Lalung pass is easier to ascend as it has a gentle gradient and up to the 1st week of November there is no snow at all. The top of the pass is not so windy and inconvenient as that of the other passes under discussion. There is only a difference of one or two miles between the

two routes and this route is the shorter one. Fruits such as grapes, walnuts, and apples and vegetables such as cauliflower, potatoes, turnips and onions are also obtainable on this route, while nothing of the kind can be had the other way. To a sportsman, partridge-shooting in the nullahs of Darchick, Achina-thang, Karpuchan and Dumkhar can further add to his pleasure in adopting this route. This way further abounds in more picturesque scenery and can afford the opportunity of seeing and dealing directly with that queer community known as the Dards of Dah, about whom I have given some account in Chapter II. These people may well be termed the aborigines of this country who being quite immune to the effects of civilization still maintain their primitive habits, customs and manners. All these aspects have been discussed in their proper place. If a visitor is really desirous to know something in detail about them he should stop a day at Dah Baima a village at a distance of 6 miles from Garkun instead of proceeding to Achina Thang. From Dah Baima he can conveniently reach Karpuchan at a distance of 20 miles. Karpuchan is a big village situated on a low-lying rock like the polo ground of Srinagar. It has a beautiful open space in the centre with houses

and fields around it. From Karpuchan he may either go to Dumkhar or Khalatse direct. The former is only 5 miles from there, while the latter is 16 in all. But it should be clearly borne in mind that the way from Silmon to Garkun is extremely trying, and riding is simply impossible for seven miles. Luggage cannot be carried by ponies but is transported by coolies. He who likes to travel by foot should take this road. From Darchik bridge which is about 7 miles from Silmon, the way becomes tolerably good as it is a road from that point, maintained by the state public works department up to Khalatse. If one can manage to ignore the tiring and troublesome 7 miles, one can really enjoy the rest of his journey by this route.

ROUTE (c)

Name of stage	Distance in miles	Height above sea level	REMARKS
1. Khalatse... ..	0		No rest House, Post or Telegraph Offices on this way but suitable shelter can be had for night's lodging in the Zamin-dari (village people) houses.
2. Tingmosgang ...	10		
3. Hemis Shugpachan	8		
4. Likir	9		
5. Nimu	11		
6. Leh	17½		

The villages are fairly big and have some neat and clean houses. A room in one or two of the houses can be taken by a visitor for a night's shelter, but this can be obviated if the visitor has a tent with him. Grassy plots for camping grounds are easily available in all these villages.

CHAPTER VI

PLACES OF INTEREST WHICH FALL *EN ROUTE*

(1) "In Kargil there is an old fort which commands the road at the junction of the Wakha and Suru rivers and is situated in an isolated boulder bed in the stream of the Suru river. The only means of its communication with the shore are the ordinary rickety bridge."

(2) On a high rocky spur, is the Lamayuru Gunpa (Monastery) in the Lamayuru village which is a stage on the main road. It is a big 5-storied building, having a great hall in its central portion in the third storey. This hall serves as the main prayer or puja hall wherein are arranged the various statues and figures of the great Buddha and his disciples. The walls are also decorated with curtains beautifully embroidered with the images of Buddha. Outside the building, just to the right of the great wooden gateway, are some 5 or 6 big praying wheels, methodically arranged in a niche within 2 parallel blocks of wood. Every man professing the Buddhist faith, who enters the monastery or goes out of it must turn this wheel, which is considered to give

religious merit to the turner thereof. In the praying wheels, the great formula of “Om Mani Padme Hung” written on a piece of paper is kept wrapped up, in a piece of cloth. Thus by turning the wheel it is considered that the formula is repeated as in counting beads, as many times as the wheel revolves.

Inside the building, quite close to the outer gateway, is an open yard, having balconies projecting on to it from the rooms standing all round. This space is meant for performance of the Lama dances and mock plays at festivals and the balconies are then used for seating the spectators. The rest of the rooms in the building are allotted to Lamas of the Gunpa as their residential quarters.

(3) Going from Nurulla to Saspul, near the latter at a distance of about 4 miles from it, lies the little village of Ole-Tokpo. From this village, which is situated on the Treaty High Road, the way turns to a nullah, behind the hills of Saspul, wherein is situated the much famed Ridzong Gunpa. This Gunpa is about three miles distant from Ole-Tokpo, and is the latest building in the history of the building of the various Gunpas in this land. It came into being after Ladakh had become a dependency of the Kashmir State.

One Thsultim Nima of Saspul, who used to go for trade to Changthang Ilaqa, became enamoured of the Buddhist religion and fell heart and soul into the study of its philosophy. But finding (as is the case with other religions), that some defects had crept into it, he made up his mind to reform it in so far as it was possible for him to do so. Thus, he laid the foundations of this Gunpa and introduced very rigid principles for observance by its Lamas and thereby set a very high standard of morality.

The main rules of morality inculcated by the followers of this lamasery are :—

- (1) Shun adultery.
- (2) Do not indulge in drinking or smoking.
- (3) Do not kill.
- (4) Do not steal or take anything unless given by others.

Accordingly, taking of meat, drinking and smoking are strictly prohibited in the Gunpa. Meat, wine and tobacco are not allowed to enter even the precincts of the building or within hearing distance from it. If a Lama falls sick, and the native physician prescribes meat or its soup as diet, they would not slaughter an animal or shoot a bird; but will get meat, from Leh Bazaar, through a special mes-

senger, as the meat so obtained is that of an animal which has not been slaughtered in the name of their sick person. Equality of treatment is another distinguishing feature of this Gunpa. In other Gunpas, uniforms to Lamas are provided, according to their grades or religious status in life, but in this all are given one kind of dress without the least regard to seniority or juniority of their grades. Besides this, there is a similarity of diet for all, quite unlike the other Monasteries. The Lamas of this Gunpa take meals only once during the day and when that is taken, they can eat nothing afterwards. If any offering is made, it goes to the commonwealth cashier and none except he will touch it. If any eatable thing is offered, they will not touch it unless it is actually lifted and handed over to them. The followers of this order belong to the yellow-robed sect of Buddhism and are given to a life of abstinence and strictest observance of the rules and principles of morality enunciated by the founder. The Lamas of this Gunpa who cultivate these rigid principles are very meek and simple in habits and pass their lives in meditation and self denial.

The Gunpa is a three-storied, finely constructed building and a traveller can break his journey for

two or three hours and pay a visit to it, after which he can stop for the night at Saspul.

(4) In the village of Likir also there is a fine old Gunpa. It is smaller than the one at Lamayuru but is believed to be the first one constructed in this country and has many antiquarian articles in it.

N. B. As to where the village of Likir is situated, the reader should refer to No. 4 of route (c) page 83.

(5) Intervening between the Nimu and Leh stages, at a distance of 10 miles from the former lies the village of Phiang in a nullah to the left side of the road. This village is about 2 miles removed from the main road and has a beautiful, finely constructed Gunpa (Monastery) known as the Phiang Gunpa. It has a curved front and is 5-storied. It has many windows on the sides and from a distance, especially from the road it has a majestic appearance. A visitor can very well break the journey for an hour or two to see it. Lamayuru Gunpa is under the Phiang Gunpa, where (the Skushok) or the great spiritual head of the monastery generally resides. He is believed to be the incarnation of some saint.

(6) Spituk Gunpa is situated on a high hill on the main road at a distance of 13 miles from Nimu. It is visible from the Spituk plain and Leh is only 5

miles from this place. There is also a Dak Bungalow quite near the Gunpa where a visitor can break his journey and enjoy good fishing in the Indus river. This Gunpa has a very young Skushok “Bakula” who is now under training at Lhasa.

CHAPTER VII

FACILITIES PROVIDED BY GOVERNMENT *EN ROUTE AND AT LEH ITSELF*

1. The whole road from Srinagar to Leh is linked by the provision of a Dak Bungalow or Rest House at each stage. These are under the State Public Works Department from Srinagar to Baltal. From Machoi to Leh, they are under the control of the British Joint Commissioner.

All travellers (European or Indian) can receive shelter for 24 hours in the Rest Houses for which they have to pay a fee of Re. 1/- each, Rs. 2/- becomes due for more than 24 hours, Rs. 3/- for more than 48 hours and so on, for Rest Houses from Machoi to Leh. For Rest Houses from Srinagar to Baltal the following rates are charged for shelter :—

- (a) -/8/- per head for 24 hours.
- (b) Re. 1/- for more than 24 hours.
- (c) Rs. 1/8/- for more than 48 hours and so on.

If a traveller remains not more than 3 hours in any of the rest houses from Machoi to Leh a fee of -/8/- annas will be charged. “No person can

claim shelter for more than 24 hours in a Rest House, after the expiry of that period he must leave if required to do so by other travellers.”

“If a traveller does not use the Rest House but wishes to pitch a tent in the compound, he can do so, by payment of a fee of -/4/- annas for each tent per day.”

“All complaints should be addressed to the British Joint Commissioner Leh, Ladakh.”

This long way is very tiring and the traveller's eye gets wearied under the sameness of gazing at nothing but rocks and loosened stones and barren hills. For his recreation the British Joint Commissioner has been kind enough to place novels at each Bungalow on the Treaty Road from Machoi to Spituk. These novels may be borrowed for whiling away the time and to break the monotony of the journey by travellers from any Bungalow between those mentioned above and left at any other Bungalow.

There being no sweepers available, no sweepers are employed in the Rest Houses from Machoi to Ladakh except at Leh.

“For the supply of grain State Kothies are maintained on the Treaty High Road at :—

- (1) Drass.
- (2) Kargil.
- (3) Lamayuru.
- (4) Saspul.
- (5) Leh.
- (6) Panamik.”

“The only cereals kept in the Kothies are wheat and giram. These can be had whole or in Atta. Anything else such as rice and dal etc. if required must be arranged for from shopkeepers at Drass, Kargil and Leh at Bazaar rates.”

“Visitors, traders, and officials travelling on duty may indent on the Kothies for the amount of grain to which they are entitled. The Res are not liable to supply grain and should not be called upon to do so.”

Other supplies.

“For other supplies such as butter, milk, fowls, eggs, sheep, oil, firewood and grass, contractors have been appointed by the British Joint Commissioner at every stage on the road. Visitors, traders and State Officials should obtain their requirements of the above articles from Parao Thekadars and pay for them at the Parao rates.”

The following table shows the sanctioned rate list of supplies on the Treaty High Road:—

NAME OF PARAO	But- ter	Fuel	Green grass	Dry grass	Bhusa	Sheep	Chic- ken	Fowl	Eggs	Milk	
	Per seer	Per Maund	Per Maund	Per Maund	Per Maund	Per Rs.	Each	Each	Per doz.	Per Seer	Sum- mer Winter
Machoi	R.A.P. 2- 0-0	R.A.P. 0-10-0	R.A.P. 0-10-0	R.A.P. 1-4-0	R.A.P. —	...	R.A.P. 1- 0-0	R.A.P. 1-8-0	R.A.P. 0-12-0	R.A.P. 0-3-0	R.A.P.
Matayan	2- 0-0	0-12-0	0-10-0	1-4 0	0-12-0	—	1- 0-0	1-8-0	0-12-0	0-2-6	0-3-0
Drass	2- 0-0	0-12-0	0-10-0	1-4-0	0-12-0	3 sr.	1- 0-0	1-8-0	0- 9-0	0-2-6	0-3-0
Shamsakharbu ...	—	0- 8-0	0-10-0	1-4-0	0-12-0	—	—	—	—	0-2-6	0-3-0
Kargil	1-12-0	0-10-0	0-12-0	1-8-0	0-12-0	2½ sr.	0-14-0	1-4-0	0- 8-0	0-2-6	0-3-0
Mulback	2- 8-0	0- 8-0	0-10-0	1-4-0	0-12-0	—	0-14-0	1-4-0	0- 8-0	0-2-6	0-3-0
Bodh-Kharbu ...	2- 8-0	0-12-0	0-12-0	1-8-0	0-12-0	—	0-14-0	1-4 0	0- 8-0	0-2-6	0 3-0
Lamayuru	2- 8-0	0-14-0	1- 0-0	2-0-0	1- 0-0	3 sr.	1- 0-0	1-8-0	0 12-0	0-2-6	0-3-0
Khalatse	2- 8-0	0-14-0	0-12-0	1-8-0	1- 0-0	—	1- 0-0	1-8-0	0- 9-0	0-2-6	0-3-0
Nurulla	2- 8-0	0-14-0	1- 0-0	2-0-0	1- 0-0	—	1- 0-0	1-8-0	0- 9-0	0-2-6	0-3-0
Saspul	2- 8-0	0-14-0	0-12-0	1-8-0	1- 0-0	3 sr.	1- 0-0	1-8-0	0- 9-0	0-2-6	0-3-0
Nimu	2- 8-0	0-14-0	0-12-0	1-8-0	1- 0-0	—	1- 0-0	1-8-0	0- 9-0	0-2-6	0-3-0
Leh, Spituk	2- 8-0	0-14-0	0-12-0	1-8-0	1- 0-0	3 sr.	0-14-0	1-1-0	0- 8-0	0-2-6	0-3-0

Rations.

“Granaries in Ladakh are maintained at considerable expense for the benefit of trade only. A concession has been made in favour of sportsmen and travellers under which they may purchase the following quantity of grain at each granary :—

(a) Each European — One seer of wheat or $\frac{3}{4}$ seer wheat flour for each day spent at a stage where there is a granary and one seer for each stage on to the next granary.”

(b) “Servants (limited to four) accompanying a European — One seer of grim or grim atta for each day’s halt and each stage as above.”

“Sportsmen and travellers are not entitled to purchase grain from the granaries for stages which are not on the Treaty High Road, nor for halts made in nullahs or at stages where there are no granaries. The rates charged at granaries on the road are as follows :—

Atta 6 seers per rupee.

Wheat 7 seers per do.

Grim 8 seers per do.

These should be paid in cash to the Kothialas in charge of the granaries.”

“At Leh itself up to 4 maunds of grain may be

purchased from the Kothiala Leh granary at the following rate :—

Wheat atta 4 seers per rupee.

Grim atta 5 seers per rupee.”

Besides this, at Leh, there being no other arrangement for supply of firewood, the same can be had from the Kothiala in charge of Leh granary at -/14/- a maund. The control and superintendence of that granary being vested in the Tehsildar, the Kothiala cannot issue the cereals or firewood without orders from the Tehsildar. The visitor or traveller should, therefore, address his requirements to that officer who will issue necessary instructions to the Kothiala in charge of the granary for issue of the commodities required.

Means of conveyance :—From Srinagar up to Drass, the coolies or transport ponies are to be arranged by application to the Tehsildar Srinagar. Generally at Gund, this is changed where onward transport to Drass is easily available, otherwise, the transport already engaged has to be directed to carry on. From Drass the world famous Res system comes in force which entirely does away with the difficulties of obtaining transport-men and animals.

What is Res?

“Res is a system by which a village or group of villages is bound to supply transport for certain stages on certain roads.”

“The word transport means and includes men and animals used for carrying passengers and goods from place to place.”

Central Asian traders :—

“Central Asian traders are those who either trade directly with Central Asia or who come to Leh in order to trade with those trading with Central Asia.”

The maximum limit of Res transport for different stages is fixed as follows :—

NAME OF STAGE	SUMMER No. of ponies or Zo*	SUMMER Coolies	WINTER No. of ponies or Zo*	WINTER Coolies
Drass	80	20	—	125
Kargil	50	20	30	30
Mulback to Nimu	40	20	20	20
Leh	50	20	30	30
Khardung in summer or Digar in winter to Panamik... ..	25	10	10	10

Note—During the months of January and February, as the traffic is nominal, the maximum limit of 125 coolies at Drass is not kept. Thus any one requiring transport in these months must give a week's notice to the Tehsildar of Kargil.

* Zo is a cross-breed of Yak and cow.

Who are entitled to use Res Transport.

“Public servants, *bona fide* travellers whether Europeans or others and Central Asian traders are entitled to use Res transport. The use is confined to personal baggage in the case of the first two categories and merchandise in the case of the traders.”

“The Public servants have the first claim to Res, after them travellers and lastly the traders. Within each of the three classes of persons mentioned, individuals may claim Res in order of their arrival at a stage.”

“Maximum weight of a Pony or Coolie load is fixed as follows :—

(1) Pony load $2\frac{1}{2}$ maunds.

(2) Coolie load Summer—Winter—i. e. Three
35 seers. 25 seers. coolies per
pony load in summer
and 4 coolies
in winter.”

“Res transport shall not be used off the Treaty High Road. For all purposes off the Road transport arrangements must be made through the local Zaildar independently of the Res.”

Limit for the use of transport.

“Res transport may not be used beyond the next

stage on the road on either side of the starting point with the exception that the Res at Drass can be employed as far as Gund in the Srinagar direction and to Kargil in the direction of Leh.”

Res Register.

“A Res Register will be kept at every stage and every person using the transport is required to fill up the details in this register.”

No demand for transport when the number fixed is exhausted.

“Where the transport kept at a stage is exhausted as shown from the entries in the Register, no person may demand transport during the period required by the said transport to return from its destination.”

“Those who cannot wait till the return of the said transport must make their own arrangements from the surrounding villages or by private negotiation.”

Arrangements for camps staying off the regular stages.

“In case of a large camp staying in a village where there is no regular stage, its requirements of transport shall be met in due proportion by the group of villages to which that village belongs under the Res arrangements.”

“The table below shows revised rates of pony

and coolie hire on the Treaty High Road from Srinagar to Leh.

Name of Stages	Summer Rates		Winter Rates		Special Rates
	16th Apr. to 15th Nov.		16th Nov. to 15th Apr.		During the time Zojila is closed
	Pony As.	Coolie As.	Pony As.	Coolie As.	
Srinagar to Ganderbal.	14	7	17	9	Rs.10 per pony and Rs.5 per coolie if the carriers are willing to travel.
Ganderbal to Kangan. .	11	6	14	8	
Kangan to Gund . .	14	7	17	9	
Gund to Sonamarg .	15 + 1B	8 + 2B	20	13	
Sonamarg to Baltal . .	9	5	..	..	
Baltal to . . Matayan	15 + 1B	8 + 4B	..	..	
Matayan to . Drass . .	12	6	..	..	
Drass to Sham- sa-Kharbu .	22	11	36	20 x	
Shamsa-Kharbu to Kargil	16	8 + 2B	25	13 x	
Kargil to Mulback .	22	11	36	20	
Mulback to Bodh-Kharbu	15	8	24	12	
Bodh-Kharbu to Lamayuru .	15 + 1B	8 + 2B	24	12	
Lamayuru to Nurulla .	17 + 1B	9 + 3B	25	13	
Nurulla to Saspul . .	14	7 + 1B	..	..	
Saspul to Nimu	11	6	..	..	
Nimu to Leh	18	9	..	..	

B.—N. B. Add on account of bad road, pass etc.

X.—During January and February only if the carriers are willing to travel, the rates are Rs. 1/7/- and 1/1/- respectively.”

Transport rates for crossing the Zojila between April 15th and the date on which Zojila is officially declared open will be Rs. 10/- per pony and Rs. 5/- per coolie provided that the carriers are willing to travel. Vide Res Rules issued by Captain G. A. Falconer, I. A., British Joint Commissioner, in April 1929.

In Leh itself.

There are two Rest Houses—one under the control of the British Joint Commissioner, which is open for all travellers, tourists and visitors etc. This is situated behind the British Joint Commissioner's residence and the rates are those chargeable for similar buildings on the Treaty High Road as detailed in the foregoing paragraphs of this chapter.

The other one is situated just near the main gateway and is known as the P. W. D. Rest House. This building is under the control of the Assistant Engineer and is generally set apart for temporary stays of that officer when on tours to Leh. On other occasions it can be given at a rent of -/8/- per head

per diem to a person wishing to stay therein with the permission of the Assistant Engineer. It is a small, beautifully built building and has 5 good rooms with a kitchen opposite in the same compound. One sub-overseer of the Public Works Department resides in his quarters which are situated behind this building. He is the man to be requested to arrange for the renting of this building as the higher officer, the Assistant Engineer, resides either at Kargil or Skardu.

For the ready reference of the reader, the writer has described in Chapter VIII the various nullahs of sport but in connection with the drafting of programmes to them, the arranging of transport and other conveniences, he is advised to see the local Tehsildar, who is the best man to advise him in all such matters.

As already stated under the head of Rations, a visitor for supply of firewood and wheat flour should address his requirements to the Tehsildar.

Man being social by nature depends upon the help and assistance of others and this dependence increases when he finds himself in an alien country. Money which is the main means of the supply of all human requirements, must readily be at hand, or he is bound

to find himself in a dilemma in a foreign land. Visitors and travellers in order to avoid the trouble of carrying money with them generally leave it behind with some bank, Post office, or friend at Srinagar to remit the same to them at Leh by Telegraphic or Postal Money Order. In some cases, the money orders are received in time but in others, even after waiting for a week or longer the draft or money order is not received. Then it is extremely difficult for him to manage his affairs. He may wish to find somebody who would advance him some money until he gets his own. In order to do this, the visitor is advised to see one of the traders at Leh who will readily advance him money by charging some reasonable rate of interest. But if the visitor finds it distasteful to approach a trader without any previous acquaintance, he should see the local Tehsildar or Aksakal or Special Charas Officer who will help him in the matter. To avoid this trouble the best plan is to bring his money with him or to see that telegraphic or postal instructions for supply of money at Leh are issued and acknowledged before he starts from Srinagar.

CHAPTER VIII

*Sonam Yangul
Batapa.*

C.O. LEH.

IMPORTANT TO A SPORTSMAN

There are three general missions, one of which may attract a man to pay a visit to Leh. Some come to this place to see this strange country and its people, others come here for exploration (on geological or scientific or historical expeditions), while some visit this place for the main object of shooting. The annual number of visitors in the last category is comparatively large and they generally remain in this country during the shooting seasons. Some are in such a great haste to reach their shooting blocks, that they do not care even to get and read a copy of the rules to which they must conform. This results in some breaches of the rules and consequent trouble and worry to the sportsmen. To avoid this difficulty, the writer takes this opportunity of reproducing in this book the most important rules, which are as follows :—

1. "All sportsmen shooting in Ladakh are required to have in their possession the Ladakh permit laid down under Game Laws Notification Rules 2 and visitors' Rules No. 105 (2) a, and 106. These will be issued by the Director, Game Preservation Depart-

ment on their signing a certificate to the effect that they have no intention of crossing the frontier either into Chinese Turkistan or Tibet. For the purpose of these rules, the Ladakh District will be held to commence :—

- (a) At Bodh-Kharbu.
- (b) At the Chorbat pass.
- (c) At the village of Hundar on the Shayok river.

N. B. The above rule applies to sportsmen only, should they wish to be accompanied by their wives or other persons who have not a shooting permit, application for a special permit must be made to the British Joint Commissioner through the Director, Game Preservation Department.

2. The Ladakh season is divided into two parts :—
- 15th April to 14th July.
 - 15th July to 15th October.

No shooting is permitted in either the Ammon or Sharpu Blocks except during the above periods.

Passes for the first period will be issued by priority of application on arrival in Kashmir territory. Passes for the second period by priority of application from any place on or after January 1st in each year. Applications for passes should be sent to the

Director Kashmir State Game Preservation Department. Sportsmen who have registered their names for the second period but are unable to avail themselves of the permits, are requested to inform the Secretary immediately so that the blocks be allotted to other guns.

N. B. Except in special cases which must be referred to the British Joint Commissioner, Ladakh, guns for the first and second period will not be permitted to enter the Ladakh shooting Districts, as above laid down, before 15th April and 15th July respectively.

3. Fixed blocks will be allotted to each sportsman by priority of application. Each sportsman will be allotted 1 Ammon block and also 1 Sharpu block. No sportsman may shoot any species of game in a block allotted to another gun. All the rest of the country not included in the blocks, except the Changchenmo may be shot over by any sportsman holding a Ladakh permit. In addition to this Block No. (13), the Stok Nalla (not Shang) is available for holders of the Rs. 10 special winter license for Ladakh.

The following blocks have been provisionally made in the Ladakh District :—

OVIS AMMON

1. The tributaries of the Indus from Dumchoke to Koyul.
2. The watershed of the Koyul river as far as its junction with the Indus, below this all tributaries of the Indus as far as the big bend of the river at Dungti.
3. The Hanle river basin as far as south of Hanle Monastery.
4. The Hanle river basin south of (3).
5. The tributaries of the Indus between the Hanle river and the Puga river.
6. The country lying between 3 and 4 on the East, 5 on the North and 6 on the West.
7. The basin of the salt lake and tributaries of the Indus between (and including) the Puga river as far as the water of the Tiri Foo.
8. The basin of the Tsomeriri lakes and the Phirsi Nullah.
9. The Tiri Foo and the country lying to the North bounded by the Indus on the North and East, the Leh Kulu Road on the West and the watershed of Tsokar Chumo plain on the South.

10. The watershed of the Zara and Rukchen rivers.
11. The watershed of the Marka river.
12. The Kharnak Nullah.
13. The triangular area lying between Chooshul on the North, the frontier on the East, the watershed of the Chooshul river and Chumathang Foo on the West and the Indus on the South from Chumathang to Dungti.
14. The catchment area of the Pangkong lake to the North and West of 13 and 14 and the Tangtse River basin.
15. The Chang Chenmo.

SHARPU

1. The Igu and Chimrrey nullahs.
2. Nang and Sabu.
3. Phiang and Taru.
4. Umla and Nimo.
5. Bazgo and Nyeh.
6. Likir and Saspul and Ule-Drokpo.
7. Hemis-Shukpa, Nurulla and Khalatse.
8. Dumkhar and Hanu.
9. Heniskot and Wanla.
10. Alchi and Lardo.

11. The watershed of the Zanskar and Marka rivers below, but including the Sku nullah.
12. Rumbak.
13. Stok and Shang.
14. Matho.
15. Shara and Lickchey.
16. Kamdok.

But the killing of Sharpu is forbidden on the Maidan lying to the North and South of the Treaty Road between Likir nullahs and Bazgo.

4. Sportsmen obtaining permission to shoot in Chang Chenmo should apply for a special Parwana from the British Joint Commissioner Ladakh without which no transport will be obtainable to cross the Marsimik La.

5. Sportsmen are warned that they are expressly forbidden to cross the frontier of Chinese Turkistan or Tibet without special permission from the Government of India. The frontier villages are strictly forbidden to provide transport beyond the limits of Kashmir territory unless the employer has a special permit.

6. The Kashmir State Game Preservation Department Rules will apply in all respects to sportsmen shooting in the Ladakh shooting District.

7. The names of all sportsmen obtaining permission to shoot in the Ladakh District will be notified by the Director, Game Preservation Department to the British Joint Commissioner Leh.”

By order,

G. Thorp, Esquire,

Director Game Preservation Department.

N. B. All shooting, trapping etc. is strictly prohibited throughout the State on H. H. the Maharaja Bahadur's auspicious birthday under Commands of His Highness.

CHAPTER IX

OVER THE PASSES TO LONGED- FOR REGIONS

When one begins to think of going to Ladakh, the first question that arises in his mind is to know when the passes open. For it is not a country to be forced into at all times of the year that he can have a sojourn in these secluded, but exquisitely charming parts of the world. The only means of communication are the rough, stony hill roads or bridle paths, some of which do certainly tire his patience ; but with all that, the hope to see what lies on their other sides keeps him up. To people used to living in big cities with fine metalled roads where cars and railways make the journeys as easy as one could imagine, the contrast is really surprising. Here he may either walk along, if he has the courage to do so, or at best can ride a pony. In some places even riding is denied by the big boulders, terribly steep ascents, or dangerous descents. Snow on the lofty peaks and snow avalanches on the high passes, add further to his difficulties, if he does not start at the

proper time and in proper season. Thus he has to be very careful to consider these difficulties. From Srinagar to Leh, there is a good road with some facilities provided in the shape of rest houses, granaries, transport arrangement etc. but farther on, especially, when he means to get into out of the way places, even these are not available. Thus he should be fully equipped beforehand.

Anyone who wishes to visit these far-off places that are situated in localities removed from the main road should also draft his programme carefully, as without that he will feel difficulties even for fuel, if he pitches his tent in an uninhabited place. The various maps and sketches of this country make mention of important villages, but the number of miles lying between them are not given. I, therefore, think that some information in regard to that, if given in this book, will be found useful as it will obviate the necessity of making enquiries when he is drafting his programme.

I, therefore, give in the following tables the details relating to some of the most important places beyond Leh :—

(a) FROM LEH TO SHAYOK VIA DIGAR PASS

Name of stage	Distance in miles	Height above sea level	Remarks
1. Leh	0	11500 ft.	No Rest House, Post or Telegraph Office in any of these stages. There are only small villages at Nos. 3, 4 and 6.
2. Pulu Digar	13		
	Cross Digar La	17900 ft.	
3. Digar	22	13080 ft.	
4. Agyam	8	10500 ft.	
5. Phakra	12	11000 ft.	
6. Shayok	14	12140 ft.	

No. 6 above is a beautiful small village on a high hill on the Shayok river. There is a Government granary in this village and a visitor, if he so desires, can have a night's shelter in one of the rooms thereof.

(b) LEH TO SHAYOK VIA CHANGLA

Name of stage	Distance in miles	Height above sea level	Remarks
1. Leh	0	11500 ft.	There is no Rest House, Post or Telegraph Office in any of these places. A visitor will have to make all arrangements himself.
2. Ranbirpur	14	11000 ft.	
3. Chimrrey	18	11890 ft.	
Cross Changla with 18000 ft.			
4. Zingrul	10	15780 ft.	
5. Tsultak	9	15950 ft.	
6. Durgub	9		
7. Shayok	11	12140 ft.	

There are good villages at Nos. 2, 3, 6, and 7. At Tsultak which is on the other side of the Pass there is no habitation at all, but there is an old dilapidated Kothi which in case of snowfall or strong wind can afford a shelter for the traveller. Tsultak is a very windy place and one often gets headache there.

(c) LEH TO PANAMIK VIA CHANGLA

Name of stage	Distance in miles	Height above sea level	Remarks
1. Shayok	0	12140 ft.	The same stages from Leh as shown in state- ment (b) above.
2. Phakra	14	11000 ft.	
3. Agyam	12	10500 ft.	
4. Satti	12		
5. Tegar	15	10080 ft.	
6. Panamik	16	11400 ft.	

At No. 2 above there is no habitation but there is a beautiful camping ground at this place. This camping ground lies in poplars and willows of spontaneous growth on a raised up platform. A small stream, coming down from the nullah at the foot of which this platform lies, flows through it, so anyone camping at this place has not to bother about water or fuel.

This route can only be resorted to from Shayok onwards when the river is fordable, as it is not at one place, that the river has to be crossed but at several places, perhaps 18 times. The whole way from Shayok on to Agyam lies along the river banks. But when once you reach Agyam, the whole troublesome part of the journey is ended.

Agyam is a beautiful small village that lies in a nullah, a little removed from the main track.

(d) FROM LEH TO DEMCHOK VIA CHANGLA AND UPPER INDUS

Name of stage	Distance in miles	Height above sea level	Remarks
1. Tsultak	0	15950 ft.	The same stages from Leh as shown in statement (b) above.
2. Tankse	15	12900 ft.	
Via Kargiam nullah			
3. Tartar camp	28	14200 ft.	No Rest House or Post or Telegraph Office is to be found at any of these stages.
4. Shushal	23		
5. Dachung	15		
Zakma			
6. Thangra	20		
7. Gangrala	17		
8. Fukche	12		
9. Lagankhel	8		
10. Demchok	16		

(e) LEH TO MURGO VIA CHANGLA

Name of stage	Distance in miles	Height above sea level	Remarks
1. Shayok	0	12140 ft.	The same stages from Leh as given in statement (b). There is no Rest House, Post or Telegraph Office at any of these places.
2. Chong-Jungal	18		
3. Danser	21		
4. Yurgulak	26		
5. Kutiklik	24		
6. Murgo	21		

(f) LEH TO PANAMIK VIA KHARDUNG PASS AND ONWARDS TO SASSIR AND KARAKURAM PASSES

Name of stage	Distance in miles	Height above sea level	Remarks
1. Leh	0	11500 ft.	There are no Rest Houses or Post or Telegraph Offices at any of the stages. It is a good village and has sulphur springs in it about which I have made mention in chapter II. There is also a Government granary there.
2. Pulu Larsa	10	15000 ft.	
Cross Khardung Pass with 17600 ft.			
3. Khardung	17	13500 ft.	
4. Khalsar	12	10400 ft.	
5. Tegar	15	10030 ft.	
6. Panamik	16	10400 ft.	
7. Umlung	15		
8. Tutyalak	11	13000 ft.	
Cross Sassir Pass with 17600 ft.			
9. Sassir Brangsa	22	14900 ft.	
10. Murgo	12	15300 ft.	
11. Kizil-langar	20	16400 ft.	
12. Pulo	18	16900 ft.	
Cross Karakuram Pass 18300 ft.			
13. Balti Brangsa	22	17000 ft.	

(g) LEH TO PANAMIK VIA DIGAR LA

Name of stages	Distance in miles	Height above sea level	Remarks
1. Leh	0	11500 ft.	
Sabu	5		
2. Pulu Camp	8		
Cross Digar La with 17900 ft.			
3. Camp Digar	22		
4. Khalsar	25	10400 ft.	
5. Tegur	15	10030 ft.	
6. Panamik	16	10400 ft.	

(h) LEH TO DEMCHOK VIA HANLE

Name of stages	Distance in miles	Height above sea level	Remarks
1. Leh	0	11500 ft.	There is no Rest House, Post or Telegraph Office at any of these stages. Good camping grounds are, however, available. At No. 2 Trikse, there is a beautiful old Monastery worth seeing.
2. Trikse	12		
3. Igu	15		
4. Likche	21		
(Himia 5. Kumgiam 5. Gaik 11.)			
5. Gaik	21		
(Kiare 11 Nee 3 Kesar 3 Chumath- ang 8.)			
6. Chumath- ang	25		
7. Mahiya	14		

Name of stages	Distance in miles	Height above sea level	Remarks
8. Nima	12	14280 ft.	This village also has an old Monastery.
9. Mankong	23		
10. Hanle	18		
11. Photi-le	11		
12. Koyul	10		
13. Lagankhel	10		
14. Demchok	16		

(i) FROM LEH TO PANKONG LAKE

Name of stages	Distance in miles	Height above sea level	Remarks
1. Tankse	0	12900 ft.	The same stages from Leh as shown in statement (d) above. From Chakar Talao at a distance of 4 miles the Pankong lake commences extending over many miles. No Rest House, Post or Telegraph Office is on any of these stages.
2. Chakar Talao	14	13950 ft.	
3. Pankong Lake	4		

(j) FROM LEH TO PUGA VIA TAGALUNG

Name of stages	Distance in miles	Height above sea level	Remarks
1. Leh	0	11500 ft.	There are no Rest Houses, Post or Telegraph Offices in any of these stages. There is of course a Govt. granary at Gaya No. 4.
2. Trikse	12	11000 ft.	
3. Igu	15		
4. Gaya	21	13500 ft.	
Cross Tagalung La with 17500 ft.			
5. Debring	15	15780 ft.	
6. Pongonagu	12		
7. Polakonkala	24		
8. Puga	15		

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